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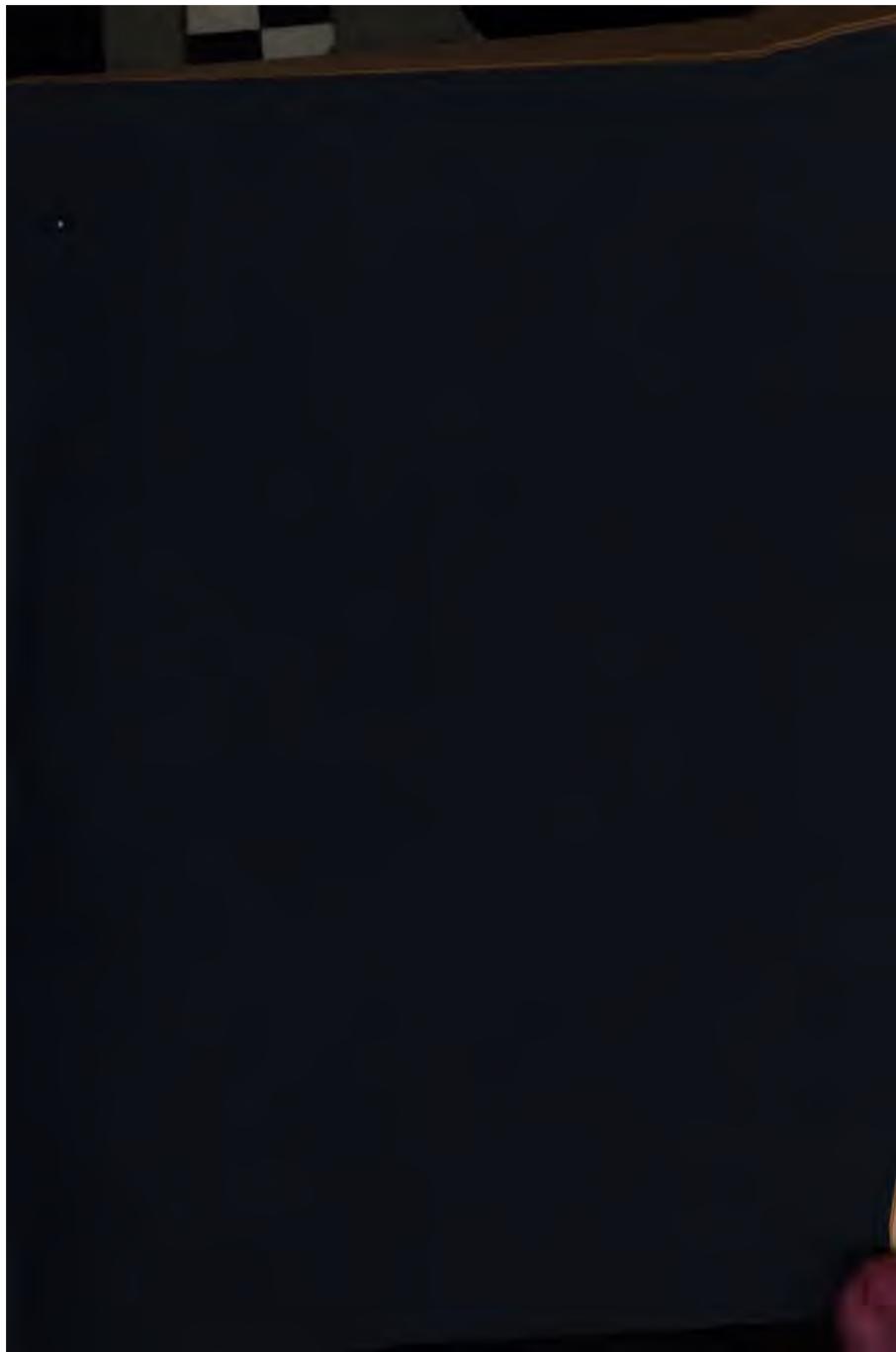
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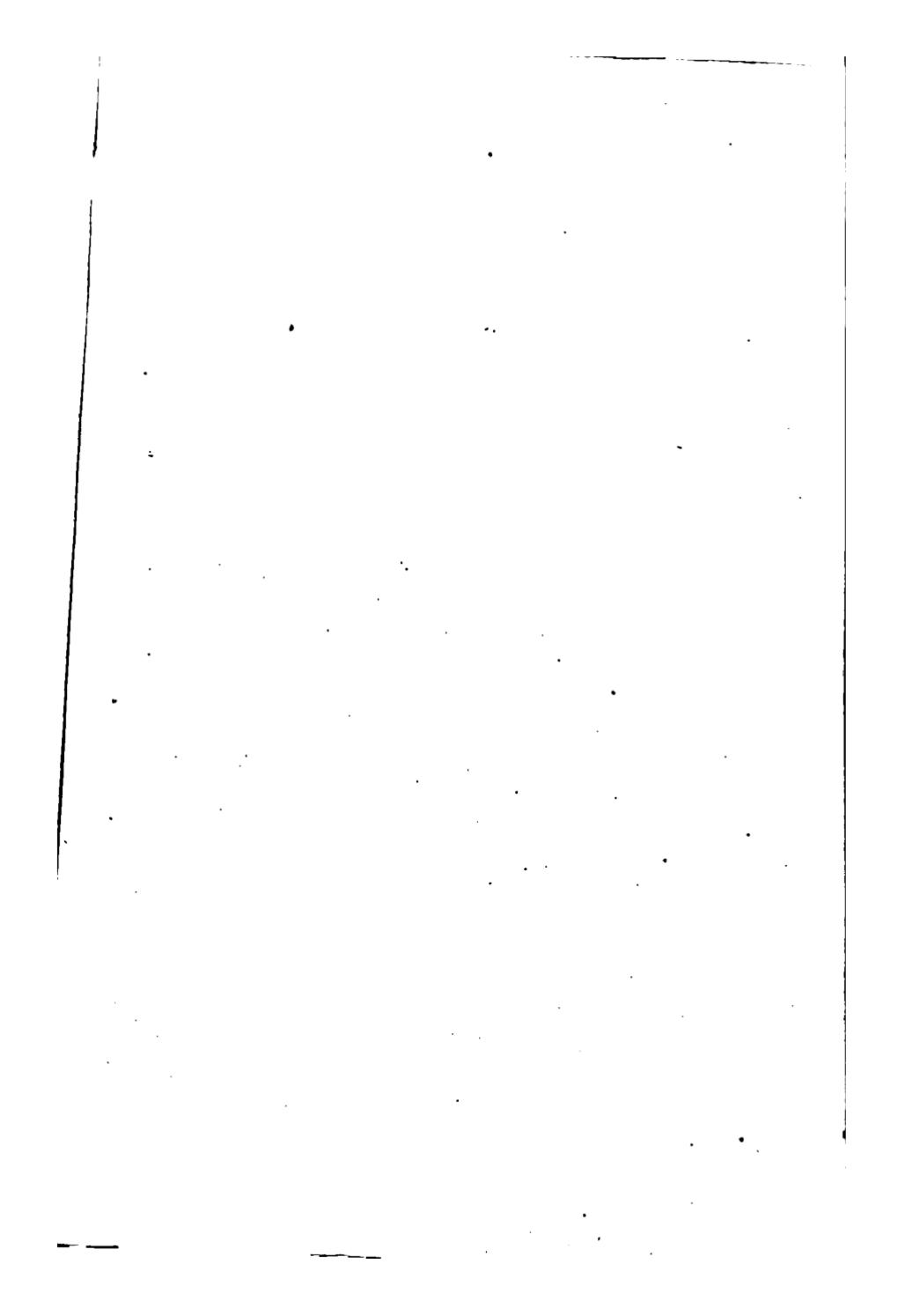
THE
English Churchman's
Companion



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The
English Churchman's Companion

LONDON : PRINTED BY
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THE
ENGLISH CHURCHMAN'S COMPANION
TO THE
House of Prayer

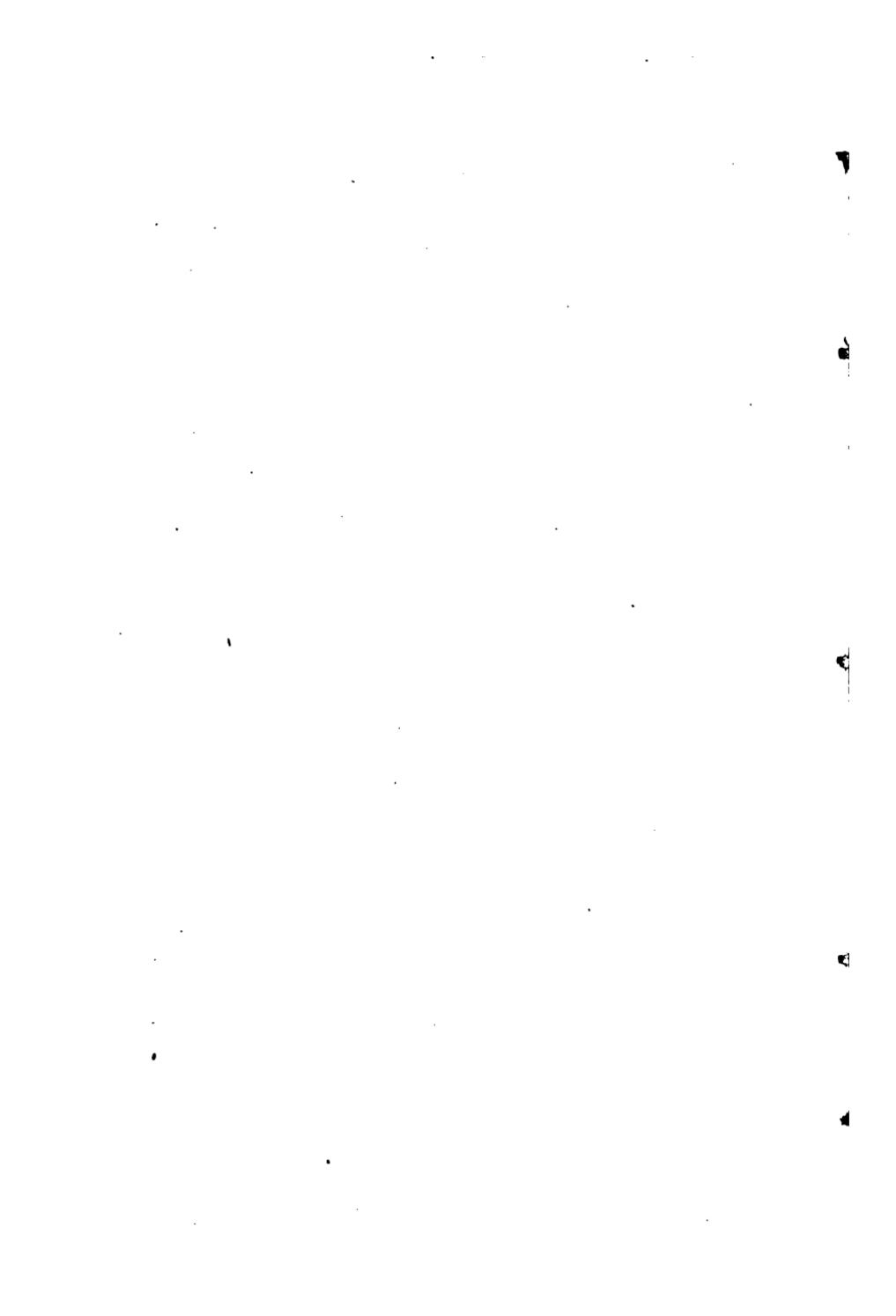
BY THE
REV. W. H. KARSLAKE, M.A.

ASSISTANT PREACHER AT LINCOLN'S INN: VICAR OF WESTCOTT, DORKING:
LATE FELLOW AND TUTOR OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD



LONDON
WILLIAM SKEFFINGTON, 163 PICCADILLY
1874

138. i. 219.



P R E F A C E.

IN the following pages, the Author has had three chief objects in view.

First, he wished to give a simple explanation of the several parts of the Daily Service of Morning and Evening Prayer, and to show the relation in which each part stands to the others with which it is connected. Such a commentary, it is hoped, may lead to a more intelligent and devout use of our forms, the force of which, from our very familiarity with the words of them, we are liable to overlook.

Second, he wished to give some idea of the origin of the parts: to show the historical connection of most of them with forms in use through long ages in the Church: and to point out the thoroughly Scriptural character of them, where they are not (as many parts are) directly taken from Holy Scripture itself.

Third, he wished to point out the practical bearing of the several forms. If the earnestness with which we offer our prayers to God depends very much on the tone of our character and life, our prayers, reversely, should shed their hallowing influence on our inner being and our daily conduct; and we should endeavour, in the words of Keble, to 'live more nearly as we pray.'

In short, he desired to lead men to reflect on the *meaning*, the *history*, and the *practical bearing*, of the forms prescribed for our use in the Service of Daily Morning and Evening Prayer.

With a view to this, he has not had either the time or the opportunity to prosecute any original researches in the midst of parochial work. But he has availed himself of all such enquiries and reflections of others as came within his reach. And he would especially thank the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn for the facilities of consulting the books in their Library afforded him as Assistant Preacher to that Honourable Society.

Some notes are added, with a view (1) to point out the sources from which any statements were derived: (2) to suggest, for those who have the time and the inclination to carry on such enquiries, the places in which fuller information on any points may be obtained: and (3) to give in a more detailed form matters which it was necessary to touch on only briefly in the text.

Some of the chapters, as originally composed, were written as Addresses to the Author's beloved congregation at Brighton; which will explain some points of omission or repetition, as well as the particular form in which, sometimes, the chapters are cast.

The Writer's desire and prayer is, that the book may tend to God's glory, through the more intelligent and hearty use of this portion of our Book of Common Prayer.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER	3
II. THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE DAILY SERVICE FOR MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER	22

PART I.

III. THE OPENING SENTENCES	30
IV. THE EXHORTATION	44
V. THE GENERAL CONFESSION	58
VI. THE ABSOLUTION	77
VII. THE LORD'S PRAYER	88

PART II.

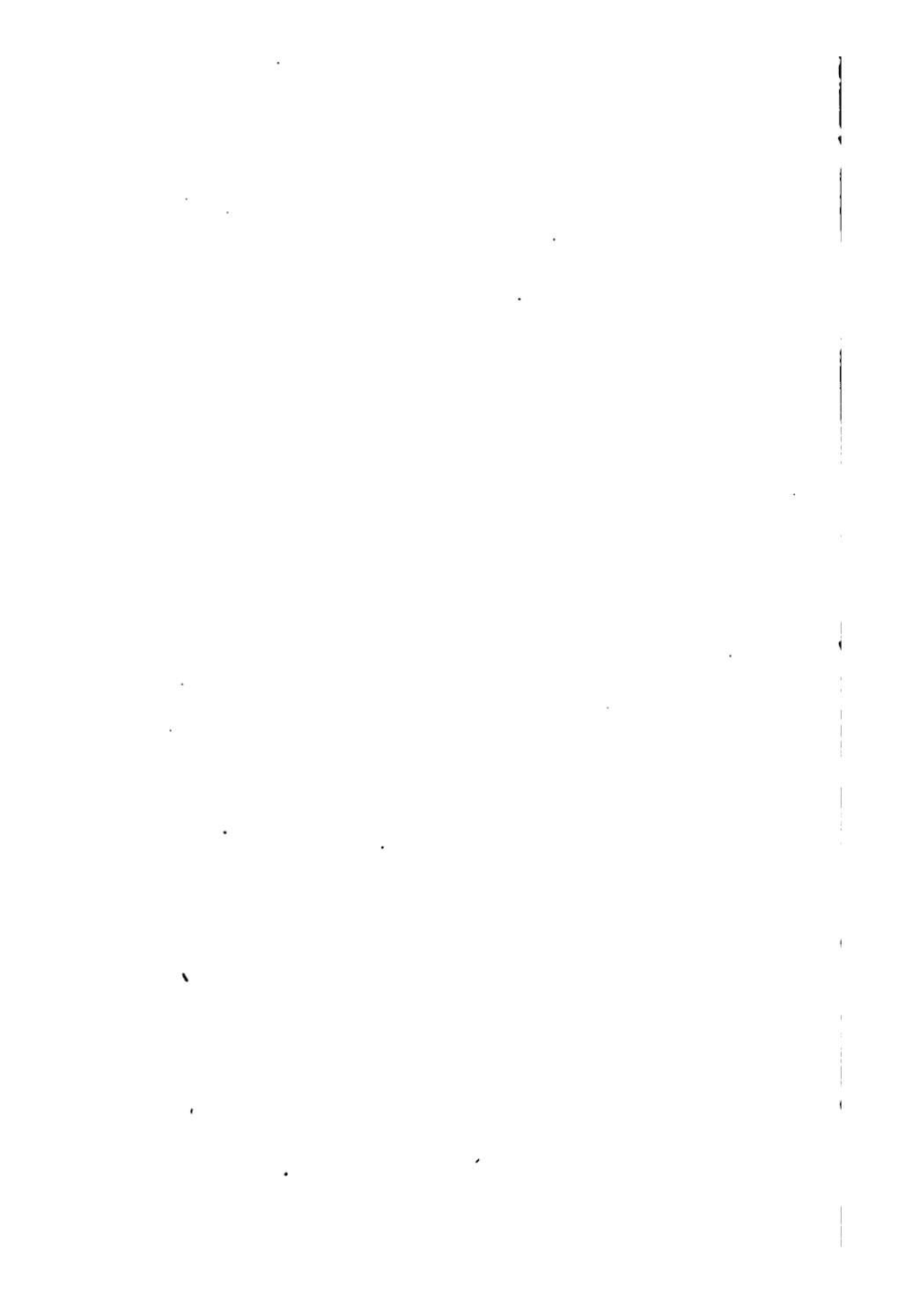
VIII. THE SENTENCES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SERVICE OF PRAISE	96
IX. THE PSALMS	104
X. THE CANTICLES	115
XI. THE LESSONS	128
XII. THE CREED	137

PART III.

XIII. THE SENTENCES PRECEDING THE COLLECTS	144
XIV. THE COLLECTS, THE CONCLUDING PRAYERS, AND THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING	154

APPENDIX.

THE EXHORTATION, CONFESSION, AND ABSOLUTION COMPARED WITH HOLY SCRIPTURE, AND WITH ANTIENT AND MODERN FORMS	167
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INTRODUCTION.

‘The Liturgy of the Church of England hath advantages so many and considerable, as not only to raise itself above the devotions of other Churches, but to endear the affections of good people to be in love with Liturgies in general.’

JEREM. TAYLOR.

‘I believe that the evangelical purity of its sentiments, the chastised fervour of its devotion, and the majestic simplicity of its language, have combined to place it in the very highest rank of uninspired compositions.’

ROB. HALL.

‘It has been happily, and, doubtless, providentially, guarded alike from excess and deficiency. It unites, perhaps beyond any other human composition, sublime truth and pure spirit: the calmest wisdom and the most energetic devotion.’

BISHOP JEEB.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

OUR English Prayer Book is no modern composition, the effusion of the thought and piety of a few devout and gifted minds. Neither is it, on the other hand, a mere work of the past, suited to the thought and feeling of a bygone age. It is rather a living tree, with its roots hidden deep down in the past, while it stands forth in all the freshness of present vigour, its dead branches removed, and it itself full of beauty and life.¹

And if many fail to enter into our Services, if they are to many—not among the poor and uneducated alone—to a great extent a mere form, if many think they find more life and heart in extempore prayers, it is because they do not understand the meaning of the several parts of the Book of Common Prayer, still less perceive the admirable plan and completeness which there is in each office, considered as a whole. ‘Even of those,’ (it has been said with truth,) ‘who do enter into our Liturgy with intelligence and fervour, few are more than half alive to the variety of its beauties and the depths of its excellencies.’²

It is proposed, therefore, in the following pages, to explain the general arrangement of that part of the Book of Common Prayer, which constitutes the service for daily Morning and

¹ See Palmer, ‘Origg. Litt.’ Pref., p. 4.

² Rev. Hugh Stowell, ‘Excellencies of the English Liturgy,’ p. 4.

Evening Prayer; and then to show the origin and connection with Holy Scripture of the several parts, and to explain the structure and meaning of them, one by one, in detail.

And before proceeding to this, it will be the object of the present chapter to give a short general sketch of the history of our Book of Common Prayer, the Book framed for us as a means of giving form and expression to our devotion when we meet, as a part of the great 'family' of Christ, for the united public worship of God.¹

Its roots are planted (as was said at the outset) deep down in the devotional forms of the Primitive Church. 'The English Prayer-Book,' writes Mr. Palmer, 'has descended to us with the improvements and the approbation of many cen-

¹ 'Ours is a Book of Common Prayer, because it is (1) suited to all classes and ranks and peculiarities of mind; (2) it is such as is suited to *all* those who, in baptism, have made a profession of Christ, and are under a vow of obligation to His service; (3) it is the *common* property, privilege, and heirloom of all those who can, in the spirit of adoption, address God as "Almighty and most merciful Father" (mark the beautiful union of *omnipotence* and *mercy*); (4) it has a catholicity as opposed to the exclusiveness of Romanism; (5) it unites by common words, not only all worshippers who use it of the present day, but of the past and future, "with all that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. i. 2); and (6) above all, it delivers us from that pride or selfishness which is apt to make us forget that we are members of one great family.'—*Bromby*, p. 19.

'The book which we are about to examine is called "The Book of Common Prayer," that is, of joint or *united* prayer; for that is the meaning of the word "common" here: (so we speak of "our common supplications," in the Prayer of Saint Chrysostom, "common and concordant," *κοινὰς καὶ συμφάντους προσευχὰς*).

'It is to such united prayer that our Lord promises especially a blessing: "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (S. Matth. xviii. 19). And this is the great advantage of having certain forms of prayer; they are a help to Christians thus to "agree together" in what they mean to ask of God. May we not say they are a *necessary* help to this?'—*Dickinson*, Lect. i. p. 2.

turies, and they who feel truly the calm and sublime elevation of our hymns and prayers, participate in the spirit of primitive devotion. The great majority of our formularies are translated from Latin and Greek rituals, and there is scarcely any portion of our Prayer Book which cannot in some way be traced to ancient offices.¹ Cranmer, as Bishop Jeremy Taylor has recorded, offered to prove that 'the order of the Church of England, set out by order of Edward VI, was the same that has been used in the Church for fifteen hundred years past.'² 'Compiled from the vast storehouses of devout antiquity,' writes Mr. Stebbing, 'the Liturgy of our Church, like the Church itself, did not in reality begin to exist when first exhibited in its present form. Its largest and most important portions were the blessed produce of Apostolic times, and the ever-valued possession of the universal Church in all its struggles and afflictions.'

And through this its connection with the old offices of the Church, our Prayer Book is connected further, to some extent, with the devotional forms of the Jews. For the Jewish ritual, it is thought, supplied in some cases not only leading ideas, but even the very form and words, to the worship of the Christian Church.³ And if this be so, it will be in accord-

¹ 'Origg. Litt.' Pref.

² For this challenge of Cranmer, see Dr. Hammond's 'Vindication of the Ancient Liturgie of the Church of England' (1660), p. 14. 'Accessimus autem, quantum maximè potuimus, ad Ecclesiam Apostolorum et veterum Catholicorum Episcoporum, et Patrum, quam scimus adhuc fuisse integrum, utque Tertullianus ait, incorruptam Virginem, nullā dum idolatriā, nec errore gravi et publico contaminatam; nec tantum doctrinam nostram, sed etiam *sacra menta, precumque publicarum formam*, ad illorum ritus et instituta direximus.'—Jewel, quoted in Bailey's 'Rit. Engl.' Pref. p. ix.

³ For this subject the reader is referred to Freeman's 'Principles of Divine Service,' where the writer traces at length the connection between the offices of the Church and the worship of the temple and the synagogue among the Jews. 'We certainly find,' he says, 'unmistakeable

ance with the example set by our Divine Lord Himself: for not only did He follow a Jewish custom in giving His disciples a form of prayer, but also the germ of that perfect form which he gave them is found existing in the old Jewish forms.¹ Nor can we wonder to find a certain amount of correspondence between Jewish and Christian services, when there was so much in common in the faith and religious feeling of which they were respectively the expressions, and the Jewish economy foreshadowed the perfect dispensation of Christ.

The history of the English Prayer Book may be divided into three main periods. The first comprises the time from the introduction of Christianity into England, to the arrival of St. Augustine from Rome, about 600 A.D. The second extends from this last date to the time of the Reformation. And the third embraces the years from the Reformation to the present time.

Of these three parts of the history, the first is necessarily the most imperfect. Of the system of Christian worship in the earliest times, comparatively little is known. It would grow up naturally by slow degrees. Only general principles, so far as we know, were bequeathed by our Blessed Lord, as to the form which worship under the new dispensation was to assume. ‘*Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.*’ ‘*Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father,*

proofs of paternity and derivation subsisting between the temple and synagogue services and those of the primitive Church.’ And he quotes the words of Jahn, as entirely adopting this view: ‘It was by ministering in synagogues that the Apostles gathered the first churches. They retained also essentially the same mode of worship as that of the synagogues, excepting that the Lord’s Supper was made an additional institution.’ Vol. i. p. 62.

¹ The author has endeavoured to show this at length in his ‘Exposition of the Lord’s Prayer.’ Preliminary Dissertations, Diss. IV.

and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' 'Do this in remembrance of Me.'¹ These and similar simple principles formed the basis on which the system of worship was reared. Her Lord willed, we think, that His Church, which was to extend over all nations, should be free to adapt her worship to the requirements of each particular place and time.² And different churches, using the freedom thus given them, would naturally

¹ St. Matth. xviii. 20, xxviii. 19; St. Luke xxii. 19. 'The public service and worship under the law was appointed by God Himself, both for matter and manner of performance; but under the gospel our Lord hath appointed only the materials and essentials of His public worship. In general, prayers, thanksgivings, confessions, lauds, hymns, and eucharistical sacrifices are commanded to be offered up in the Name of Christ, in the virtue and merits of that Immaculate Lamb, whereof the other was but a type, and for whose sake alone that was accepted. But for the manner and order of His public worship, for the method of offering up prayers or praises, and the like, our Lord hath not particularly determined how, but hath left that to be ordered and appointed by those to whom He said at His departure out of this world, "As my Father sent me, so send I you," to govern the Church in His absence, viz. the Apostles and their successors in the apostolic commission. And therefore St. Paul writes to Timothy, the Bishop and Governor of the Church of Ephesus, to take care that prayers and supplications be made for all men, especially for kings, &c. And concerning the manner of celebrating the holy Eucharist, St. Paul gives some directions, and adds, "the rest will I set in order when I come." And, "Let all things" (i.e. all your public services—for of those he treats in the chapter at large) "be done decently" and καρδιτάξιν, according to ecclesiastical law and canon.'—Sparrow, 'Rationale,' pp. 4, 5.

'Each church, therefore, was left, through the wise forethought of Him who alone "knew what is in man," to provide for its own wants as they should arise;—to steer its own course by the chart and compass which His holy Word supplies, regulating for itself the sails and rudder according to the winds and currents it may meet with.'—Whately, 'Essays on the Christian Religion,' p. 355.

² The simple service of the Sunday of the primitive Church is thus described by Justin Martyr, in his first 'Apology,' ch. 67. It will be seen that it consisted of *reading* from the Old and New Testament; an *address* from the minister; *prayers*; simple *administration of the Eucharist*; and a *collection* for the poor.

'On the day which is styled the Sunday there is a meeting held of

frame their forms of worship more or less differently, according to the diversities of condition and character of those for whose use they were being arranged, and whose devotional feelings they were to express. The various tendencies, too, of those leading spirits who influenced the formation of the ritual of their time, would naturally impress their stamp on the ritual thus formed. 'It is clear,' Bingham writes, 'by the Epistles which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthian and other churches, that every church hath power in itself to order their forms of worship, and the administration of Sacraments among them, so as might best tend to order, edification, and peace.'¹ And it was on this principle, accordingly, that the churches acted in early times.

'If then it be asked,' Mr. Freeman observes, 'what was the ordinary Service of the Church of this country from the first introduction of Christianity down to the time of St. Augustine's arrival, it may be answered that here, as throughout Western Christendom, it was most probably a Service of Psalms and Hymns, performed, originally at least, partly at

all who are dwelling in the country or in the towns, and the memorials of the Apostles, or the writings of the Prophets, are read as far as the time allows. Then, when the reader has finished, he who presides at the meeting makes an address, directing and exhorting the assembly to be imitators of those good things which they have heard. Then we all stand up together, and offer prayers. And, as was said before, when the prayers are ended, bread is brought, and wine, and water, and he who presides offers up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the people join with him, saying Amen; and each one receives a portion of the elements over which the thanksgivings have been offered, and partakes of it; and a portion is sent by the deacons to those who are not able to attend. And then those who have means, and wish to do so, give, each what he pleases, according as he is disposed in his heart. And the president receives what is collected, and helps with it the orphans and widows, and those who are in want through affliction or any other cause, and those in prison, and strangers residing among us. In short, he becomes almoner for all who are in need of help.

¹ Book ii. Part iii. vol. ii. p. 623.

night, partly in the early morning, and again in the evening; that it commenced possibly with some kind of penitential preparation, or else with the Venite: that it was devoid of Scripture lessons, the Psalms being used for the purposes of meditation as well as of praise; but contained responsive Canticles, among them the Te Deum, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis. The 51st and 63rd Psalms were also probably used in the morning office at daybreak, with more Canticles, such as the song of Moses &c. Such, we may fairly presume, were the offices used in the church of St. Alban and St. Amphibalus. The change to the offices introduced by St. Augustine, though considerable, would thus be no greater than that the other churches of the West had experienced in the century or two preceding, and would be rather of the nature of a development than of an actual substitution.¹

It is to the second period of the history, ushered in by this change, that we pass on now. 'The condition of the ancient Church of this country,' Mr. Procter writes, 'at the close of the sixth century, was most deplorable.' And it has been said that 'when Augustine undertook his mission, it does not appear that among all the Saxons there was a single person professing Christianity.'² It was in 597 A.D. that Augustine, the missionary of Pope Gregory the Great, arrived from Rome. The immediate object of his mission is represented as having been rather to convert the heathen Saxons than to influence the existing British Church, which, indeed, refused to co-operate with him.³ But the effect of his mission was gradually to reform

¹ 'Principles of Divine Service,' vol. i. p. 240.

² Burke's 'Abridgment of English History,' quoted in Carwithen, 1, 3.

³ When Augustine arrived in England, he found that, although the West Saxons were heathen, and had driven the church into the highlands of Wales by their persecution, yet seven bishops remained alive,

the faith and practice, and re-organise the ritual of the British Church. From this time, accordingly, the second period in the history of English ritual begins.

The two main models of Liturgies at this time were the Gallican and the Roman.¹ And Augustine, using the discretion allowed him by the Pope of Rome,² appears to have prudently reformed the ritual of the English Church in conformity with the Gallican rather than the Roman form, as being that with which the existing ritual of the Church was connected.³ Thus the ritual of the early Church in England

and a large number of clergy, who had very strong views about the independence of the Church of England, and were unprepared to receive the Roman missionaries, except on terms of equality. Annotated Book of Common Prayer, Hist. Introd., p. xvii. More on this subject will be found in Hardwick's 'Church History, Middle Ages,' pp. 6, 7.

¹ The Liturgies of the mediæval Western Church appear to be derived from two models, the Roman and the Gallican. The latter retained more features of its Oriental origin, and is said to have been followed by the Churches of Spain and Britain. Of the daily offices also, in their earliest forms, the leading characteristics appear to have been the same in the East and in the West; and hence, in the reconstruction of the Western ritual, which is supposed to have taken place about the fifth century, Eastern improvements and details were received with great facility. And the change which was introduced in the seventh century was probably no greater than the other churches of the West had already experienced.—*Procter*, ch. i.

² The following is the letter of Pope Gregory, as given by Bede:—
'You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman Church, in which, you remember, you were bred up. But it pleases me, that if you have found anything, either in the Roman, or the Gallican, or any other Church, which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you carefully make choice of the same, and sedulously teach the church of the English, which is as yet new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several churches. "For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things." Choose, therefore, from every church those things that are pious, religious, and upright; and having, as it were, made them up into one mass, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto.'—*Bede*, Book i. ch. xxvii. p. 47. Giles' Translation.

³ 'Augustine followed the principle upon which the rituals of the

followed in the main the Gallican form, while it held its own national use, especially in the ordinary daily offices. Nor was the entire Roman ritual ever introduced, 'although attempts were made to force it upon the Anglo-Saxon Church, and although the influence of Augustine's successors was doubtless felt in this direction in guiding those changes in rites and ceremonies and prayers, which every Bishop was empowered to ordain in his own diocese.'¹ 'The custom of each diocese, in its ceremonial, mode of chanting, arrangement of certain portions of its services, introduction or omission of Collects, became a distinct *use*, and was known by the name of that diocese.'² The most remarkable of these was the *Use of Sarum*, the result of a revision made by Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, and Chancellor of England, about the year 1085. It was adopted very generally; and for more than four centuries and a half was used as the chief devotional rule of the English Church.³

And now we are brought to the third period, that of the Reformation, when our own present ritual was—we must not

European churches had been remodelled; and introduced into England the form of service which he found in the South of France (supposed to have been compiled from Eastern sources by Cassian (*Freeman*, i. 249), with certain details which are referred to the Popes Gelasius and Gregory').—*Procter*, p. 3.

'The Gallican Liturgy,' Mr. Bennett observes (p. 34), 'was in its origin Asiatic, being traceable from Lyons to Smyrna, through Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, to Polycarp, and from Polycarp to the Apostle St. John himself.' *See Palmer's 'Origines Liturgicae'*, vol. i. 9.

'There can be no doubt that several waves of Christianity, perhaps of Apostolical Christianity, passed across our island: and the Ephesine or Johannine element in the ancient Prayer Book of the Church of England probably represents but the strongest of those waves, and the predominating influence which mingled with itself others of a less powerful character.'—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer, Hist. Introd.*

¹ *Procter*, p. 3. *See also Palmer, 'Origg. Litt.'*, i. 186.

² *Procter*, p. 3.

³ *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, p. 18.

say *compiled from*—but rather, formed by a revision and expurgation of the forms already existing in the Church. The following were the materials with which the Reformers had to work. Over and above the *Manual*, which was the book of occasional offices, containing the services for Baptism, Matrimony, &c., there were two main Service books at this time; the *Breviary*,¹ containing the order of ordinary Service throughout the year, which was revised by Cardinal Quig-
nonez, in 1536; and the *Missal*, containing all that was required for the service of the Mass, corresponding to the service for the Holy Communion with ourselves. These books, varying (as was said before), more or less according to the *uses* of the various dioceses, were the three chief service books from which our present Book of Common Prayer was drawn.² In composing it, our Reformers adhered as closely as possible to the existing forms, only rejecting what appeared to them to be the unscriptural or dangerous after-growth of later times, referring the existing forms constantly back to the forms of the early Church, translating what they preserved into the language of the people at large, occasionally ‘communicating by some happy expression even an additional glow of devotion to passages in themselves (it might be thought) too beautiful to touch.’ To simplify what was complicated, to correct what was erroneous, and to translate all into the language of the people,³ was the main

¹ ‘About the eleventh century, the Breviary was formed out of all these books: the Psalter, the Bible, the Antiphonarium, the Hymnarium, the Collectarium, the Homiliarium, Passionarium, and Martyrologium. The lessons, anthems, responsories, hymns, &c., for the different days of the year, being all placed in the same volume with the Psalter, Prayers, &c.’—*Palmer*, i. 208.

² On these different ‘Uses’ see *Carwithen*, i. 235.

³ ‘In the whole compass of English literature, many as are the excellent versions of ancient writings which it can boast, it would be in vain to look for any specimens of translation (merely to put the case

threefold design of the framers of our Book of Common Prayer.

‘Nothing is more remarkable in the original Preface to the revised Services’ (Mr. Freeman observes),¹ ‘than the utter unconsciousness which it manifests on the part of the revisers, of *having done anything more than revise*. Certain things taken away: a certain fusing and consolidation of elements before disjointed and broken up: certain provisions for securing that the Psalms and Lessons should be really and thoroughly *used*, and not skipped for the most part as in times past: and the turning of the whole into English,—this was their entire idea of what they had done. They expected the people and church of the day to accept the Services as essentially, and for all practical purposes, the same Services, revised: and, what is more, as such the church and people manifestly did accept them.’ These were the principles on which the revision of the English Service Book was carried out.² But the work

thus), so vigorous, so simple, so close, and yet so free from all constraint, as are afforded by the offices of our Church.’—Blunt, ‘Sketch of the Reformation in England.’

¹ Vol. i. p. 8. The objects of the compilers of this first English Book of Common Prayer are stated in the Preface: that the whole realm should now have but one ‘Use’ in Divine Service: that the rubrical directions, ‘the number and hardness of the rules called the Pie,’ should be simplified: that the Psalms should be all repeated in their order, instead of a few being ‘said daily, and the rest utterly omitted’: that the Lessons should include ‘the whole Bible, or the greatest part thereof,’ in a continuous course, and the reading of the chapters should not be interrupted by Anthems, Responds, and Invitatories: that nothing should be read but ‘the very Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, or that which is evidently grounded on the same,’ and that all should be ‘in the English tongue.’—*Procter*, p. 24.

² ‘It was not the purpose of the English Reformation’ (writes Mr. Carter) ‘to ignore the traditions of the past, the changes which then took place being avowedly grounded on an appeal to an earlier standard. Its object, as oft-repeated declarations of its leaders abundantly testify, was to correct abuses and remove novelties of doctrine or practice

was only performed slowly and by degrees. And the Book of Common Prayer was subjected, when completed, to various criticisms, according to the views and tone of mind of those who criticised it, and went through various revisions, the general result of which was to make it more exact and comprehensive, before it assumed its present form.¹ Thus, whereas the formation of it was begun in the reign of Henry VIII., it was first brought out in the third year of the reign of Edward VI., June 9, 1549, and it was revised afterwards in 1552, during the same king's reign. Then it was modified somewhat in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and again after the Hampton Court Conference in the reign of King James; and finally, after the Savoy Conference held on the Restoration of King Charles II.²

Such, in general outline, is the history of our Service of which had grown up during the Middle Ages at variance with primitive revelation.

¹ A good short sketch of these revisions will be found in 'The Liturgy of the Church of England,' by Rev. J. Jefferson, pp. 15-26.

² As to the introduction of the Prayer Book into Ireland and Wales, Mr. Procter writes: 'It was not until February 6, 1551, that an Injunction was sent to the Lord-Deputy of Ireland to have the English Book of Common Prayer read in the Irish Churches: . . . and thus the English Prayer Book began to be publicly used on Easter Sunday (March 29) in the Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin. The Second Book of Common Prayer does not appear to have been ordered for observance in the Irish Church: nor was any attempt made to translate the whole or parts of it into the Irish language. It may be doubted whether it was used beyond the circle of the Lord Deputy's Court, for the native priests did not understand English; and, if adopted by those English clergy who occupied the larger benefices, it would be as unintelligible to the people as the Latin Service which it supplanted. The language, indeed, presented such obstacles, that the proposal was entertained to allow a Latin translation of the Book of Common Prayer to be used in the Irish Churches—a proposal which was actually sanctioned by the Irish Parliament at the commencement of the reign of Elizabeth. The Irish and the Welsh were left in their ignorance, from the unwillingness of the learned to master their languages' (pp. 36, 37).

Common Prayer. It had its origin in the worship of Apostolic times, which adopted, probably, so much of the old Jewish ritual as was suitable—the use of the Psalms especially—into the Service of the religion of Christ. The germs of it were brought to us by those, whoever they were, who introduced Christianity into England in very early times. It was revised to some extent at the coming of Augustine about 600 years after our Lord's birth. And again, after a period of about 900 years had exercised its influence over it, it was more completely revised by our Reformers, who wished to bring it into harmony with the wants of the age and the teaching of Apostolic times. But all along there was but development and revision of the old, not the creation and substitution of anything wholly new.

All critical reflections, all questions as to future revision, would be out of place here.¹ Rather, let us close our slight review of its history with some practical thoughts.

¹ The following is the reflection of Dr. Goulburn on this point. 'The plain, nervous, chaste language of the English Prayer Book has this defect, that it does conceal from all but those who will be at the pains to look below the surface, an amount of art, and care, and erudition, which probably is to be found in no other uninspired book. While it must be freely conceded (lest we trench on the prerogative of Holy Scripture), that the Liturgy, like all uninspired compositions, has its defects, yet if, when the mind is brought to bear upon it, all the blemishes discovered in it at least admit of justification, and some of them are positively seen to be beauties, revision surely would be a dangerous task, which might issue in rooting up much good and wholesome wheat, for the sake of ridding the field of a few so-called tares. Let divines whose minds are deeply imbued with Scripture and primitive antiquity, and still more with a spirit of devotion, after making themselves thoroughly acquainted with Liturgical literature generally, and with the history of our Liturgy in particular, have full liberty to undertake the task of revision, *if with such qualifications they should think it expedient*. But we are persuaded that men so qualified would recoil from it. The more they possessed of the erudition and the piety requisite for the task, the less they would think that they could achieve it satisfactorily. The

And first, let us reflect on the gratitude which we owe to God for giving us so great a blessing as our Book of Common Prayer unquestionably is.¹ It is not the expression of the thoughts and feelings of one mind, or of a few minds alone, but it is the outflow of the piety of many generations; while, in the course of ages, it has been proved to meet fully, and express truly, the feelings and wants of all.² In it the

passages they had at first crossed for examination and correction would seem to them more and more Scriptural and primitive as the light of Scripture and primitive antiquity was more and more let in upon them.'—'Communion Office,' Part iii. end.

¹ 'Never need a Christian, except when his own heart is strangely indisposed, fail to derive benefit from its ordinances, and he may bless the overruling Providence of God that, in this instance, the natural variableness and inconstancy of human opinion is, as it were, fixed and settled, and hedged in by a stated service, so pure, so evangelical, and which is enriched by so large a portion of Sacred Scripture. Perhaps there has not been, since the age of the Apostles, a church upon earth in which the public worship was so solemn and so cheerful; so simple, yet so sublime; so full of fervour, and at the same time so free from enthusiasm; so rich in the gold of Christian antiquity, yet so astonishingly exempt from its dross. That it has imperfections we do not deny; but what are they compared with its general excellence? They are as the spots on the sun's disc, which a sharp observer may detect, but which neither diminish the warmth nor obscure the brightness.'—Life of Hannah More, p. 330, quoted from Works, vol. xi. p. 69.

² 'These simple and sublime words' (writes Dr. Goulburn on the Communion Office) 'are the wings on which many devout souls have been borne up in their flight heavenward. Thousands and millions of the faithful have found no juster expression of the desire, the hope, the gratitude, the love, of which their hearts were full. While a form of prayer is quite new and untried, we are unable to form a judgment as to its value. An experiment must be made of it before its excellencies and defects can be recognised—before we can see the fulness and depth of it, if it have these merits, or discover (what is soon discovered in most modern prayers) its shallowness of thought and feeling. What a precious heirloom, then, must those pieces of devotion be, of which the faithful from the earliest ages have made experiment without finding in them any defect: with which successive generations have been perfectly satisfied as a vehicle of devout sentiment!'—'Communion Office,' Par IV. sect. 1.

ignorant finds instruction, and the thoughtless warning, the mourner comfort. In it there is that which may recall the wanderer, and revive the fires of a once fervent devotion and love. There the heathen, the ignorant, the sin-laden; those who bear rule in Church and State; those who are in danger, or affliction, or distress—all are remembered before God. There the penitent, the adoring, the grateful, the sorrowful, the fearful, all find the best expression for the feelings of their hearts. And thus we may regard our Prayer Book as a treasure of spiritual wealth, laid up through long ages of the Church, and pervaded, as we hope, by the influence of the Holy Spirit which Christ has promised to His Church: like some mine, formed layer by layer, and storing up whole centuries of the sun's warmth and light, and ready, when the torch is applied to it, to burst forth into flame again. Therefore let our spirits rise in gratitude to God each time we use the Book of Common Prayer. That which has been bequeathed to us as such a precious legacy of instruction and devotion, let us receive with the gratitude which is its due.¹

¹ There is a remarkable testimony borne to the excellence of our Prayer Book in a lecture of the Rev. T. K. Beecher, pastor of a Congregational church in Elmira, New York.

‘Of all Protestant Churches, the Episcopal best deserves the name Reformed. She preserves so many of the usages and excellencies of the Roman Church, and so few of her errors, that it is quite easy to perceive that she is a Reformed Church. All other Protestant Churches are revolutionary rather than reformed.

‘In English there are no lessons, gospels, psalms, collects, confessions, thanksgiving prayers—in one word, no religious form-book that can stand a moment in comparison with the Prayer Book of the Episcopal Church in the twofold character of *richness* and *age*.

‘And, brethren of every name, I certify you that you rarely hear in any church a prayer spoken in English that is not indebted to the Prayer Book for some of its choicest periods.

‘And further, I doubt whether life has in store for any of you an

Then, secondly, we should consider how thoroughly Scriptural our Book of Common Prayer is throughout; how it faithfully represents the spirit, and is usually couched in the very language, of the Word of God; so much so, that it is capable of being illustrated and supported from Holy Scripture all along in all its more important points, while it is (as it has been well said), the best of all commentaries on Holy Scripture in itself.¹ Taking, as we do, for our rule of faith and practice, Holy Scripture as interpreted by the teaching of the Church, we ought surely to regard it as a special blessing that our Service Book is so thoroughly Scriptural, that it is, as it were, throughout, the breath of a spirit moulded in all its thoughts and feelings by the Word of God.

Further we should reflect, thirdly, that our Prayer Book not only embodies the wisdom, and spiritual enlightenment, and holy devotion of all the past ages of the Church, but that it stands also as a monument of those who devoted all the energies of their chastened piety and wisdom to the formation of it, sometimes sealed their adherence to its teaching by their blood. And then we shall feel that those words '*What mean ye by this service?*' which the youngest child in the congregation is taught to repeat (as the writer is

uplift so high, or a downfall so deep, but that you can find company for your soul, and fitting words for your lips, among the treasure of this Book of Common Prayer.'

¹ 'Of the Prayer Book' (writes Archdeacon Berens) 'by far the greater part consists of the very words of Scripture,—as the Psalms, the Epistles and Gospels, the Scriptural hymns, and other select passages. The remainder of it expresses the sentiments and the spirit of Scripture, generally in Scriptural language. It might be well if this were borne in mind by those who disparage the Liturgy of the Church of England, and treat it with neglect, perhaps with contempt. Let such persons consider whether they do not expose themselves to the censure of the Apostle: "*He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God.*"'—Archdeacon Berens: Preface to 'History of the Prayer Book.'

told)¹ at the Jewish Paschal Service to this day, may be applied with a special force by us; that we are bound to study, and enter into, and teach our children the meaning of that beautiful Service, framed with so much labour, which we are permitted to enjoy. That which has cost so much pains to compose, that which will so amply repay the labour of minute examination, we should spare no effort to understand. Let us also, I would add in passing (though this is not to our present purpose), beware of disturbing lightly the stones of a building reared by the hands of master-builders with so much care.

And once more, let us consider, lastly, how we are linked by it into communion with the wise and good of all past times.² And then, as we use it, there will rise up before us memories of those near and dear to us, relations and friends who have passed away from earth, or who are parted by distance from us, of saints and martyrs, and the long array of those who have departed this life in God's faith and fear, and who, during the years of their lifetime on earth, offered up to God the Father, and the Saviour, the same worship, breathed up in the Holy Spirit the same prayers, as

¹ This was told me by the late distinguished Hebrew scholar, Dr. M'Caul, who had been a missionary for some time among the Jews.

² 'One of two courses was open to our Reformers: either they might have compiled an entirely new book of services, or they might have remodelled the old ones. We can never be sufficiently thankful that they were guided of God to choose the latter course; for the ancient Service Books contained the prayers of saints who had served God in unspeakable purity and holiness of life.'—Baird's 'Inheritance of our Fathers,' p. 8.

'The principal of them' (the framers of our Prayer Book) 'were masters of all the learned materials which had connection with their great subject: but in their wise discretion they were above the vain folly of changing what did not need reform, and they looked for the way that was good rather than the ways that were new.'—Dr. Burrowes, Dean of Cork, p. 23.

ourselves.¹ Thus will sweet and holy associations shed their softening power over our spirits and mingle with our prayers; and we shall feel ourselves to belong indeed to that great company, of whom part have crossed the stream, and are with Christ, 'which is far better,' while we remain on earth to carry on the work appointed to us by God, and prepare our spirits for heaven. We shall realise that we are one with those who are gone, united to them as sharing the same hopes which once supported them, and as worshipping God with a form of pure worship which, in its general spirit and essential features, has been handed down through the ages to our own time. So will thought, and imagination, and memory, and feeling all contribute to bring up the high, and sweet, and holy associations which blend with our service of Common Prayer, and give wings to the spirit, lifting it up to God in heaven. Yea, and if we ourselves offered these prayers once, in days of greater innocence or more fervent devotion, with an earnestness which we now have lost, these prayers may

¹ Lord Macaulay speaks of the 'beautiful Collects which have soothed the griefs of forty generations of Christians.' Mr. Baird, in quoting this, adds that 'There are eighty-three prayers, which go by the name of Collects, in our present Book of Common Prayer. Of these it has been calculated that fifty-eight have been in use in the Church for 1,200 years. The originals of most of these may be found in the Sacramental Books of Leo, Gelasius, and Gregory the Great,' pp. 71, 76.

'There is one thing,' it has been truly written of late, 'which has survived all changes, and has asserted its supremacy over all schools of thought—and that is the Book of Common Prayer. In that volume, or rather in those devotions, Englishmen of all schools have found solace in their troubles and encouragement in their doubts: it has been the bond of family life and the key-note of private feeling. No such achievement, perhaps, is recorded in modern history as that which has attuned the hearts of a whole nation for ten generations to one spirit and tone of thought.'

bring back, by God's mercy, the saddening memory of what we once were, and recall us to a better mind, to more hearty devotion, rising out of penitent and adoring love.¹

¹ 'Nor is the use of these prayers confined to one time only, like a sermon, which passes away and is forgotten; but it is the continual and frequent use of the same prayers which is so beneficial to us; for when we pray with these prayers, they stir up within us holy and better thoughts; and when we use them again, such better thoughts as we have had of old in connexion with them come again into our minds; holy thoughts, and associations, and feelings become stored up within them.'—Isaac Williams, 'Plain Sermons,' p. 21.

There is an excellent passage on this subject in Monro's 'Parochial Work,' p. 86.

CHAPTER II.

THE PLAN OF THE SERVICE FOR DAILY MORNING
AND EVENING PRAYER.

THE Service for Daily Morning Prayer, as framed by those who composed our Book of Common Prayer, has become so blended in common use with the Communion Service, or at least with the first part of it, as to be regarded popularly as one with it. It is found practically a most difficult matter to disabuse of this error the minds of even the more instructed among the poor. And with those who are more educated there still lingers very generally a strong prejudice against using the offices apart, according to their original design, so completely are they regarded now as making up one whole.

Yet the framers of our Prayer Book would be astonished, if they were alive, to see the manner in which the offices for daily prayer have been used, and to observe how the separate offices have been combined almost universally till of late, and are very generally combined still. They would be surprised to find the use of the Services for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer confined to the Sunday, to a great extent, whereas they had clearly indicated the way in which they desired them to be used, styling them, 'The Order for Morning and Evening Prayer daily throughout the year,' directing the Te Deum to be sung or said *daily throughout the year*, according to its own words, 'Day by day we magnify Thee,

O Lord ;' and so arranging the Psalter that it ' shall be read through once in a month,' as it is there appointed, both for Morning and Evening Prayer.¹ They would be astonished, too, to discover that the offices were so used that the Collects should become more or less unmeaning which refer to the 'beginning of the day,' as if it were early morning ; and to the dangers of the night, as if night were close at hand. Further, they would be amazed to find the service of Daily Morning Prayer, and that for the Holy Communion, practically joined into one. They would observe that this could not but cause repetitions, and disturb the plan of the Service as arranged by them. They would claim that the fault should not be laid at their door, if petitions for the same objects should recur in different forms, and the Lord's Prayer be repeated to an extent sufficient to justify the objection that it is liable, when introduced so frequently, to degenerate into a mere unmeaning form.

To understand, then, the plan of our Daily Service, it must be borne in mind that the framers of it designed it to be used, at morning and eventide, day by day, throughout the week. ' So was it,' writes Bishop Sparrow, ' of old ordered in the Church of Christ. And this is agreeable to God's own law : " Thou shalt offer upon the altar two lambs of the first year, day by day, continually ; the one lamb in the

¹ ' If these expressions, taken as a whole, do not manifest the desire of our Church for a *Daily Service*, it is impossible to say what could do so. The whole construction of the Service Book rests on this idea. With it, it is a perfect compendium of Scriptural instruction and devotion ; without it, it is spiritless and meaningless. With it, we may compete with the Church of Rome, or any other Church, in the national offerings of a devout people. Without it, we sink into an ungrateful and lethargic selfishness, and must not wonder at a population springing up around us who are without God in the world.'—Bennett, ' Book of Common Prayer,' p. 91.

See also the two concluding paragraphs in the Preface to the Prayer Book, ' concerning the Service of the Church.'

morning, the other at evening." Besides the daily private devotions of every pious soul, and the more solemn sacrifices upon the three great feasts of the year, Almighty God requires a daily public worship, a continual burnt offering every day, morning and evening, "teaching us by this," saith St. Chrysostom, "that God must be worshipped daily, when the day begins and when it ends, and every day must be a kind of holy day." Thus it was commanded under the law; and certainly we, Christians, are as much, at least, obliged to God as the Jews were; our grace is greater, our promises clearer, and therefore our righteousness should every way exceed theirs, our homage to Almighty God should be paid as frequently, at least. Morning and evening, to be sure, God expects from us, as well as from the Jews, a public worship, a "sweet savour," or "savour of rest," as it is in the Hebrew, without which God Almighty will not rest satisfied.¹

How excellent was the arrangement of our Church in providing a Service for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer,

¹ 'Rationale,' pp. 3, 4.—'The Church of England,' Mr. Palmer remarks, 'at the revision of our offices in the reign of Edward the Sixth, only prescribed public worship in the morning and the evening, and in making this regulation she was perfectly justified; for though it is the duty of Christians to pray continually, yet the precise times and seasons of prayer, termed canonical hours, do not rest on any divine command. Thus the Church of England left her clergy and people to follow in private the injunction of the Apostle to "pray without ceasing," for, as John Cassian observes, a voluntary gift of praise and prayer is even more acceptable to God than those duties which are compelled by the canons; and certainly the Church of England did not intend that her children should offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving only in the morning and evening when she appointed those seasons for *public* worship. Indeed, we find that a book of private devotion, containing offices for six several hours of prayer, and entitled the "Orarium," was published by royal authority A.D. 1560, from which Dr. Cosin, Bishop of Durham, chiefly derived his "Collection of Private Devotion" &c. The Primer, which was a translation of the "Orarium," contained Psalms &c. for six hours of prayer.'—Palmer, 'Origg. Litt.' i. p. 203

and how much we lose, nationally and individually, by the disuse of her provision which has been allowed to grow up, is becoming more and more generally felt. On this subject the words of one of our writers on the Book of Common Prayer are full of force. ‘How is it that our souls are fixed to earth, but because we never lift them to heaven ? How is it that we complain of temptation being too strong for us, but because we do not pray to be relieved from it ? How is it that we are *nationally* a worldly, time-serving, cold-hearted people, all classes given (as it seems), without a respite, to the Mammon of unrighteousness, without power to shake it off, but because we are not a people of *public, national*, Church prayer ?

‘Oh ! that we could shake off this canker of Mammon and this wantonness of luxury ; that we could realise the fond wishes of our Church ; that we could but see our clergy ministering daily at her altars as though that were their great work, *interceding in daily prayer* ; that we could see our nobility and gentry manfully divesting themselves of the lethargic apathy with which they speak of the things of God, their love for ease and pleasure, and heed for little else but pomp and ostentation and vanity ; that we could see our poor, our labourers and mechanics, spared from their hard task-masters, spared but for some short moments, for a daily prayer in God’s house. Surely we should be a nation nearer to God than we are. There would be more blessing in our preaching, more union in our Church, more charity in our opinions, more gentleness in our language, more honesty in our dealings. God would be more in our hearts—Jesus, our ever-blessed and adorable Saviour, more in our faith.’¹

¹ Bennett, ‘Book of Common Prayer,’ pp. 96, 97. There is also a passage well worth perusal on this subject in Monro’s ‘Parochial Work,’ pp. 80-85.

How this devout wish of the writer can be carried out; how the time and plan of the Daily Service can be best adapted to the circumstances of the various classes of the community, are matters well worthy of consideration, and requiring the exercise of much practical judgment, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. The two things—a more general appreciation of the value of the Daily Service of the Church, and a more complete adaptation of the Services to the wants of those who desire to attend them—must grow up simultaneously.¹ Each will naturally act upon the other. An increasing desire will lead to an endeavour to supply the want. And with the supply, the desire for the Daily Service and appreciation of its value may quietly and gradually increase in turn.

In considering, then, the Services for Morning and Evening Prayer, we are to regard them as being, according to the intention of those who framed them, offices separate from the rest of the Prayer Book, to be used, as far as possible, not on Sunday only, but day by day throughout the week.² Then, on Wednesday and Friday in each week, as the days of our Lord's Betrayal and Crucifixion, the Litany, or Service of Special Supplication, addressed more particularly to our Lord, was to be added to the Services of Daily Prayer. And on Sunday, the day for especial commemoration of our Lord's Resurrection, the office of the Holy Communion, with the sermon for exhortation and instruction introduced into it, and the Litany, as a service of preparation, prefixed to it,³ was to

¹ The plan for the shortened Daily Service is a great step towards this.

² 'The office of Matins, or Morning Prayer, according to the Church of England, is a judicious abridgment of her ancient offices for Matins, Lauds, and Prime; and the office of Evensong, or Evening Prayer, in like manner, is an abridgment of the ancient service for Vespers and Compline.'—*Palmer*, i, 206.

³ 'By a rubric in the Communion Service,' (in the First Prayer Book), 'the Litany was to be said on Wednesdays and Fridays, according to the form appointed by the King's injunctions, which directed, as we have

be the additional and peculiar office, distinctively marking the Lord's Day. The Collect of the Communion office on the Sunday was to be introduced into the Daily Morning and Evening Service for the week, and give, as it were, a special tone to it, and form the one varying element in the Service, which otherwise, speaking generally, was to remain unvaried throughout the Christian year. Such, in a general way, was the plan for the public worship of the Church which the Reformers designed. We are to confine our thoughts now to the examination of the Daily Service for Morning and Evening Prayer alone.¹ And it is clearly divisible into three great parts. *First*, there is what may be called the Service of *Confession*, which is fitly placed first in the worship of such a being as man, consisting of the opening Sentences, the Exhortation, the Confession, and the Absolution, with the Lord's Prayer closing it, as the prayer of those who draw near to God as accepted penitents in Christ, and forming a connecting link with the second part. Then, *secondly*, there is the Service of *Praise*, composed of the Psalms, the Canticles, and the Creed, with the Lessons from the Old and New Testaments intermixed, the Praise of God leading the mind to meditation on Him as revealed in His Word, and this again lifting up the spirit to more fervent, adoring praise. Then, *thirdly*, there is the Service of *Petition* and *Thanksgiving*, opening with the Lord's Prayer, which is repeated now as the summary

seen, that the priest should say it in the body of the church, kneeling at the head of the congregation, immediately before he began the Communion Service.'—Massingberd, 'English Reformation,' p. 372, 3rd edit.

See Cardwell's 'Documentary Annals,' p. 187, where this is given as an *Injunction* of Queen Elizabeth: 'Immediately before the time of Communion of the Sacrament, the priests, with other of the quire, shall kneel in the midst of the church, and sing or say plainly and distinctly the Litany.'

¹ Other parts of the Book of Common Prayer the writer hopes to treat of at a future time.

of petition, and the model on which all our petitions should be framed ; and including the Collects, the various intercessory prayers, and the General Thanksgiving. And then, with the beautiful Prayer of St. Chrysostom (as it is commonly called), and the Benedictory Prayer, the Daily Service is brought to its close.¹

Thus are all the four elements which should enter into a complete Service, each in its proper order and appropriate place, introduced into our Services for Daily Prayer, namely, Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, and Praise. Not that they can be separated altogether. Praise will run into thanksgiving, and thanksgiving may well rise up into

¹ Mr. Freeman (i. 154) points out how in the old offices the prevailing features were (1) praise ; (2) meditation on the Law of God 'and the great Christian verities ;' (3) 'prayer and supplication for all saints,' and 'for all men : for kings, and for all who are in authority ;' and (4) 'underlying all the rest—laid as the basis of all at the commencement of each Service, and breaking out even and anon afterwards throughout, more especially in the morning daybreak office, (which, as in the West afterwards, is half penitential,) is the deep confession of sin and unworthiness, powerfully contrasting with the elevated tone of the offices as a whole.' And then he shows the correspondence of the offices of the English Church, in that (1) there is the due *proportion* of praise ; for that 'this important element pervades their whole structure ; and the latter revisions of them, more especially, tended to enlarge it' : (2) 'with us, as with the Eastern Church, meditative learning and pondering of Holy Scripture goes hand in hand with praise, and is only second to it in consideration' : (3) with us, prayer and intercession come in as a third element with these ; prayer no less deep and personal, and intercession no less wide and catholic at the least, than that which we discern in the Greek offices' : (4) with us, finally, 'the foundation of penitential confession is deeply laid at the commencement of *both* our Services, and characterises their whole tenor to a degree which has called forth the scorn of enemies and the half-regretful and apologetic admission of friends. Surely, of one thing at least the English Church need not be ashamed, viz. of bearing in her ritual the marks of the Crucified. With her, as with her ancient Eastern prototype, the "strength" of praise is made perfect in the "weakness" of confession.'

praise. So, confession of sin past naturally issues in petition for pardon and future help. It is in a general way only, and with reference to their tone in the main, that the several portions of the Service, as thus divided, can be regarded as distinct.

Now we are to examine the separate parts of each branch of the Service somewhat more in detail.

It only remains to add, as the practical consideration which the foregoing remarks suggest, that, if we would be loyal to our Church in following her directions, as well as zealous in seeking to serve God and to obtain the fulness of His blessing for ourselves, we should be regular in offering up to God day by day our tribute not of mere lip-service, but of earnest heartfelt communion in prayer. It may be that we are unable to join in the united service of the congregation in the house of God; though this Daily public Service is set before us by the Church (as we have seen), as an ideal to be aimed at by all who have it within their reach. But all may, day by day, in their private chamber at least, if not with the household, meditate on some portions of the Word of God, and pour forth heartily to God their confession and petition, their thanksgiving and praise. Each day, as we enter upon it, brings its own dangers and trials to be encountered, its own needs, its own grounds for tendering praise and thanksgiving to God. And each day also, at its close, tells of new transgressions of God's law, in thought and word and deed, to be confessed, 'new mercies past' to be gratefully acknowledged, new circumstances stirring up the heart to pour forth its petition for pardon and for help. The food of the day is sought daily for the sustenance of our natural life. And we need, similarly, by daily, nay continual, communion with Him who is the 'Bread of Life,' to gain fresh and fresh outpouring of pardon, and light, and strength, to purify, and guide, and support us in the difficulties of our spiritual life.

PART I.

CHAPTER III.

THE SENTENCES.¹

PUBLIC worship is now to begin. The congregation are about to hold communion together with God. The worshippers have entered God's house, there to engage in the solemn service of united public prayer. And now, therefore, that rule applies specially, which even natural instinct would suggest, and which is enforced in the words, 'Before thou prayest, prepare thyself, and be not as one that tempteth God' (Eccl. xviii. 23); '*tempteth*' Him, by putting His forbearance and long-suffering to the proof. It is for this object of preparing the mind before we venture to address God in prayer, that the opening Sentences are designed. They are intended to *attune* the mind before it engages in prayer; while the exhortation which follows aims rather at

¹ *At the beginning, &c.* (Rubric). On beginning the Service in any other way than with the Sentences, Stephens remarks: 'It is clear from this rubric that the Sentences, Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution must begin the Morning Prayer, and that they cannot be preceded by any other words.' And before, he writes: 'The clergy, when they promise to conform to the Liturgy, bind themselves to conform to it in both its parts; not only to use the form of words, but to use it in the manner prescribed in the rubric.' The 'two parts' he had before described as 'the forms of devotion which the minister is to use; and the rubrics, or directions as to the manner in which they are to be used, or the order, the posture, and the different parts of the sacred edifice in which they are to be recited.'—'Book of Common Prayer, with Notes,' by Arch. J. Stephens, pp. 388, 389.

directing it when engaged in prayer, and kindling in it a holy fervour in entering on the work for which it has thus been prepared.¹

‘Prayer,’ writes Dean Comber, ‘is not only an excellent means to obtain all blessings, but the very act itself is an elevation of the soul to contemplate the beauties of the Divine Nature; that by beholding such transcendent perfections it may learn to love, desire to please, and delight to imitate so great and exact a Pattern. And consequently, it is a duty of the highest concernment. For it is an honour and a benefit to us, and yet it is accepted by God as our homage and the testimony of our observance. It is a high favour to be admitted to have familiar converse with the King of kings, and a huge advantage to have so frequent access to the Fountain of all goodness. But then it is difficult as well as fair; and requires so much attention and serenity, zeal and vigour, faith and love, reverence and

¹ ‘I think these Sentences were appointed to be repeated before Divine Service, that we might have an equivalent preparation to our Liturgy to that which is prefixed before the Roman Missal, and used by the priest before he comes to celebrate.’—Bp. Cosin, Works, vol. v. p. 44 (Anglo-Cath. Library).

‘In the 1552 Prayer Book these Sentences, with the Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution, were prefixed to Morning Prayer, but not to Evening Prayer. This addition was suggested, probably, by the second reformed Breviary of Cardinal Quignonez, in which the ancient Confession and Absolution, hereafter given, were placed at the beginning of Matins. But other reasons are also apparent for the change. In the first place, the full effect of the dissolution of monasteries was making itself felt by ritualists, and a penitential prefix to the Service was considered more appropriate for a mixed congregation than the previous mode of opening it, which was suitable for communities professedly spending nearly their whole time in the religious portion of a Christian’s duty. And, in the second place, a relaxation of the rule about private confession made it expedient to place a public confession and absolution within the reach of all, day by day.’—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

humility, that it can neither be well done, nor kindly accepted, without some preceding preparation. For these souls of ours are so clogged with corruptions, disturbed with passions, and so constantly entertained with the vanities which our senses present us with, that we find our minds pressed down when we would lift them up to God. Therefore the Church directeth us first to prepare our hearts before we begin to pray. The Jews are taught when they enter their synagogues to stand silent awhile in the posture of prayer, before they begin their devotion. The primitive Christians had a preparatory preface to their public prayers as long ago as the time of the famous St. Cyprian. And we are appointed to exercise our souls in the meditation of these sentences of Scripture with the exhortation subjoined, that we may thereby become more fit to pray. Surely it is requisite for us to reflect upon the vast disproportion between ourselves and God, which is as great as between finite and Infinite, Holy and impure; and so we may be convinced of the necessity of being most lowly and reverent before Him. And that which should lay us lowest of all in our own thoughts is the remembrance of our sins, which alone do alienate us from God. Wherefore our spiritual guides present us with these admonitions to repentance before we begin to pray, lest we should stumble at the threshold, and pray in vain, while we remain impenitent; for there is a moral impossibility such prayers should prevail. The petitions of sinners are either a heap of contradictions, or a contexture of indignities against the God of Heaven; for such men bewail that with their mouth which they love in their heart, and ask forgiveness where they are neither sensible of an offence nor will own the pardon as a favour; they accuse themselves for that which they did willingly, and never condemned themselves for, but will reiterate upon the first opportunity; they require things that they hope He will not

give ; and if they ask anything seriously, it is either inconsiderable, or with evil designs, and so becomes a provocation. But lest we should experience the truth of this in our eternal ruin, we are advised to a serious repentance, which will be the best harbinger to all our petitions ; for if we see our sins, and feel their weight (it is to be hoped), we shall draw near with low apprehensions of ourselves, and strong desires after God, with an high opinion of Him, and a hearty love to Him, with many fears, and yet many hopes. And who can be more fit to pray ? What better foundation for those prayers which must reach as high as heaven, than humiliation and repentance ? Now the better to dispose us to pray in this manner, God Himself is brought in, speaking to us in sundry places of Holy Scripture. The voice of God brought our first father to repentance (Gen. iii. 9), and it will surely have the same effect on us ; for who dares refuse when He invites that can pardon or punish, save or destroy ? He begins first to speak to us in His holy Word to whom we are about to speak in our prayers ; so that those who expect God should hear their prayers, must hearken to His Word, especially where the matter is so excellent and of so great concernment to us, as in these invitations to repentance from the mouth of God Himself.¹

It will be observed that the Sentences are drawn from many parts of Holy Scripture.² Eight are taken from the Psalms

¹ 'Of the Morning and Evening Prayer,' pp. 1-4.

² 'There is one clause,' it has been observed, 'in the last Sentence (from St. John, 1. 1. 9) which it may be well to notice particularly. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." What does the expression mean, "*just* to forgive" ? Is it not *mercy* rather than *justice* which we speak of as being concerned with forgiveness ? Yes ; the promise of God is, "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have *mercy*"; and that because "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin." But God is faithful to His own gracious promise. He was

and Prophets of the Old Testament, the Psalms naturally supplying the larger part ; while the New Testament contributes three more. And of these last, one is the word of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, one is the word of our Lord Himself, and one is taken from the first Epistle of the last surviving Apostle, St. John.¹ Thus various parts of the Old and New Testament are made to contribute to the Sentences with which the solemn service of our Church begins, each supplying one or more pillars, as it were, to the corridor along which the mind is led up to worship in the House of God, that so from all parts of God's Holy Word voices may sound on our spiritual ear, bidding us draw near to God in penitence and sincerity of heart, with full assurance of being accepted by Him in Jesus Christ our Lord. And this plan of setting short passages from Holy Scripture in the very forefront of the Service, stamps at once on the Service that thoroughly Scriptural character which was spoken of before as pre-eminently belonging to it throughout.

But further, the Sentences, many in number, are more or less diverse in their tone, though they all contain the same general ideas, of the duty of sincere penitent admission of sin on the one hand, and of trust, on the other hand, in the mercy of God, as the fitting preparation for drawing near to Him. And this variety in them serves an excellent end. For different not bound to make that promise ; but now that He has made it, He is too righteous in His own nature, too just in His dealings with man, not to fulfil it to those who seek it through Christ Jesus, to whom, being accepted in the beloved, "there is now no condemnation."—See Kay, 'on Psalm LXXI.' v. 11.

¹ 'The Sentences are so selected, that we have the testimony of God's Spirit, heard in a long series of ages, and under the Old as well as the New Dispensation, to the glorious truth, that He desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he may repent and live.'—Stebbing.

'Thus is the *whole* Bible,' writes Mr. De Teissier, 'in both its Testaments, the Old and the New, made a voucher for the grace of God in receiving those that come to him in the appointed ways.'—P. 4.

minds require to be differently attuned. Some are despondent, and need to be raised; some are over-confident, and need to be humbled; some are hard, and need to be softened; some are tender, and require comfort; some are thoughtless, some ignorant, some formal, some in doubt. And accordingly the Church providently supplies Sentences fitted for different characters, and different frames of mind, and different seasons of the Church's year.¹

For some Sentences are to some extent more suited to the times preceding seasons of penitence, as the weeks before Lent; those, namely, which recall to us our sin, and summon us to repentance. Some, again, are more adapted to the seasons of meditation and penitence themselves, as Advent, and Lent; those, namely, which acknowledge sin and express sorrow for it. Some, again, are more fitted for the joyous seasons of Christmas and Easter; such as those which speak of God's willingness to welcome the penitent, and restore the sinner, on his return, to His favour and love.²

Then again, (as was said above), some are more suited to some frames of mind and dispositions, some to others,

¹ The first expressions with which the minister summons your attention, are *texts for sinners*, chosen out of the Scriptures; and chosen, not as the inconsiderate might suppose, without deliberation: gathered from among a thousand others of the like meaning, and thrown together without any view to particular application. For it is ever a *mixed multitude* which assembles in the House of God; differing in circumstances, characters, feelings, and tempers, and all requiring a *word in season*. It would be well therefore on this account, if the minister, as it was designed, would frequently *vary his choice* in the reading of these opening Sentences.—Rev. H. Howarth, 'The Liturgy as It is,' p. 18.

² *Procter*, p. 208.—There are some other passages which may well be added to those given in the Sentences of our own Church, as bearing on the same two points as those introduced into it. 'Adde huc quod ad invitandam penitentiam egregia sunt misericordiæ et longanimitatis Encomia, Ps. 78, 28: Jerem. 3: 7-12: Heb. 4.'—Bishop Andrewes, quoted in Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

although they all have an inner connection, and breathe the same general spirit throughout. Thus there are (to take their most general distinctive features)—

Two, to *awaken* in us a *sense of sin*, and *call us to repentance* for it. { 'If we say that we have no sin,' &c.
'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven,' &c.

Four, to *direct us in making* public confession of our sin. { 'I acknowledge my transgressions,' &c.
'Hide Thy face from my sins,' &c.
'I will arise, and go to my Father,' &c.
'Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,' &c.

One, to *bid us beware of formalism or hypocrisy* in our confession of sin. { 'Rend your heart, and not your garments,' &c.

Four, to *assure us of God's willingness to forgive sin to the truly penitent.* { 'When the wicked man,' &c.
'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,' &c.
'To the Lord our God belong,' &c.
'O Lord, correct me, but with judgment,' &c.

To these the American Prayer Book (it must be noticed in passing), adds three, referring directly to—

The *public worship* of God. { 'The Lord is in His Holy Temple,' &c.
(Hab. ii. 20.)
'And in every place incense shall be offered,' &c. (Mal. i. 11.)
'Let the words of my mouth,' &c. (Ps. xix. 14.)²

¹ 'Thus we see the Church hath shewed her care of these contrite ones in selecting the most and choicest of these Sentences for them, who are the best, though the least of the people: and though such are *vile in their own eyes*, yet they are dear to God, highly valued by all good people, and tenderly indulged by the Church, who wishes there were more of this blessed temper.'—*Comber*, i. 19.

² 'In these Sentences, or variable capitula, as we may call them, we possess one of the few appliances which remain to us for setting the tone of the Service according to the season or day. For this purpose, however, they are capable of becoming far from inefficient instruments,

And it would be well to bear these additional Sentences in mind. For while the Sentences given by our own Church direct us as to the spirit in which we should always be when we draw near to God and commune with Him in prayer, these Sentences of the American Prayer Book (at least the first two of them), add the additional thought that we are now come into His special presence in His House of Prayer. And they remind us that the attitude of real sincere sorrow for sin, of terror at God's just wrath against it, and yet of hope of pardon through God's mercy to the penitent, in Jesus Christ our Lord, befits us specially now when we are about solemnly to draw near together for public worship to Him who has promised

thus compensating for the absence of variety in our Invitatory. Their position at the very outset of the Service gives them perfect command over the whole of it, enabling them to fix its character from the very first. They can, indeed, only mark different degrees of penitence: nor, all things considered, and looking especially to the example of the Eastern Church, can we wisely desire that, even on Sundays or Festivals, the office should altogether part with this character. The Sentences from the Prophets, then, as being old Lenten features, and again those from the Penitential Psalms, will fitly characterise penitential seasons or days. The one exception is Dan. ix. 9, 10: "To the Lord our God," &c., which, differing in origin, is also of a more cheerful tone. This, therefore, with the New Testament Sentences, is suitable for Sundays and Festivals, or ordinary days; St. Matthew iii. 2, perhaps to Advent.—Freeman, 'The Principles of Divine Service,' vol. i. chap. iv. sect. ii. page 327.

'As Invitatories intended to give the key-note to the Service, they may be advantageously used in the following, or some similar order, appropriate to the various days and seasons:

Advent: 'Repent ye.' 'Enter not.' 'O Lord, correct me.'

Lent: 'The sacrifices.' 'Rend your heart.'

Fridays and Vigils: 'I acknowledge.'

Wednesdays: 'Hide Thy face.'

Ordinary days: 'When the wicked man.' 'I will arise.' 'If we say.'

Sundays, other holy days, and Eves: 'To the Lord our God.'—'Annotated Book of Common Prayer.'

that where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

It will be observed that the minister is bidden in the rubric to 'read some one or more of these Sentences of the Scriptures that follow.' When two Sentences are read, it is well that they should be so chosen as that one should refer to the duty of sincere repentance for sin, and confession of it, on our part; the other, to God's gracious invitations to all who will come to Him with a truly penitent heart, in deep consciousness of sin, and to the promises of full pardon held out for all such by Him.

These Sentences were not in our Prayer Book as originally put forth in 1549. The Daily Service then began with the Lord's Prayer, or with the Lord's Prayer and two Versicles preceding it. But in the Revision of 1552 the Sentences, Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution were added as an introduction to the Service of Public Prayer.

The idea of beginning with such Sentences at all is in harmony with the general plan of our Service Book, which uniformly endeavours to prepare the mind of the worshipper for the particular element of worship in which he is about to engage. It may have been more immediately suggested by the old offices. For at one of the Services of the earlier English Church it was customary to begin with a single penitential verse of a Psalm, in the form of a Versicle and Response. In the morning, on week days, it was, 'Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us,' &c. In the evening it was, 'Turn us, O God our Saviour, and let Thine anger cease from us.' These Sentences preceded the usual opening, 'O God, make speed,' &c., and may possibly have suggested the idea of those Sentences with one or more of which we begin our Daily Service of Morning and Evening Prayer.¹ The particular

¹ 'Two,' Mr. Freeman writes, 'of the old English offices (not of the

Sentences chosen may apparently be traced to the 'Capitula' or 'short passages' of the Early Church.¹

Thus is the mind of the worshipper not only instructed by Holy Scripture from the very first, not only attuned to the solemn worship in which he is to engage, but also brought into harmony with the worship of the far-distant past, and led to offer to God a holy worship now, akin in its general features to that which has gone up from our forefathers through the centuries of the Christian Church.

These reflections on the opening Sentences may be concluded with two brief practical remarks. First, all the worshippers of our Church should be urged earnestly and affectionately to give these Sentences their due weight. Not without good reason, and careful selection, and ancient precedent (as we have seen), have they been placed where they are by those who framed our Book of Common Prayer. None should let them fall unheeded, day by day, upon their ear. Still more, none should, as the manner of so many is, come hurriedly into the House of God while these Sentences, one or more of them, are being delivered, or even without care whether they have been already delivered, as if they were of no weight. To do so is to be not only indifferent to our own best spiritual interests, but

Roman), one in the morning and one in the evening, viz. Lauds and Compline, commenced with a single penitential verse of a psalm; only in the form of a versicle and response, coming before the usual opening, "O God, make speed," &c. It is just possible that this may have suggested the idea of the Sentences.'—i. 322.

Mr. Palmer observed that, 'According to the rites of many Western churches, a verse or capitulum was read before the office of Compline, or at the latest evening service: a custom which is at least as ancient as the time of Amalarius, A.D. 820; for he mentions it.'—i. 210.

¹ 'The capitulum was generally on the Sundays a short passage from the Epistle, or a short summary of the Epistle, used at the Evening Service, to connect that service with the Holy Communion of the morning through the Epistle for the day. But during Lent the capitula were all penitential texts from the Prophets. And those of our Sentences which

also unfaithful to our own beloved Church, and selfishly inconsiderate about the good of others, whose devotional meditations we thus disturb. Value then, my Christian reader, these Sentences rightly. Listen to them attentively, while they are being said, and you *stand* up to hear them, in the attitude of devout reverential attention, as our Church directs. And more, meditate on them thoughtfully and with silent prayer, during such time as you may have for reflection before the service begins, in the quiet of the House of God.¹

are drawn from the Old Testament correspond to these capitula, or else are taken from the Penitential Psalms, which were said every day during Lent. In this way the short passages used for attuning the mind by the earlier Church in the penitential season of Lent supplied part of the penitential sentences by which the mind of the devout worshipper is prepared at all times by our own Church.'—See *Freeman*, i. 324. 'The verse from the prophet Daniel,' it is observed in the 'Interleaved Prayer Book,' 'is an exception. This and the New Testament verses were additional selections made by the Reformers.'

¹ 'The text from the prophet Joel, *Rend your heart, &c.*, may suggest a remark as to our demeanour upon entering the house of God. What may appear to be slight circumstances of external deportment are frequently plain indications of a mind very imperfectly spiritual. When the patriarch awoke out of the visions of his sleep from beholding the angels of God passing to and fro between earth and heaven, his heart was filled with awe, and *he was afraid and said, How dreadful is this place.* If that was a reasonable fear, the natural and necessary result of that impression upon his mind which he describes, then the same reflection ought surely to beget in us the like sentiment of godly fear. For are not we also impressed with the belief that this *is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven?*'

'Is it compatible, then, with such feelings to spend the brief interval which may elapse before the Service of the sanctuary is begun, in gazing about with an air of idle curiosity, or in engaging in trifling converse with those nearest to us? Yet how constantly is this done; very often, we do not doubt, from the mere absence of reflection; but often also, we cannot but fear, from something akin to that spirit which in ancient times would rend the garment, but not the heart. We are not in a condition to say (albeit only this could excuse us), *Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not;* for we come hither in faith, *professing* to meet Him, to supplicate, to praise, to thank Him.

And, in so meditating upon them, think of them not only in themselves but also in reference to the context in which they occur, and the circumstances under which they were severally delivered. Remember, they are sounds from God in heaven, though given through men, and daily declared by men His ministers to men on earth. Remember, too, that each sentence is part of one whole; a note in an entire strain of harmony; a line in a complete, though broken, address. If you bear this in mind, then, whichever Sentence is read, at the discretion of the minister, or whichever you may meditate on as more specially suited to your own case (in the way explained before), it will call up the spirit of the whole train. It will bring up with it the entire strain which breathes through the Sentences, of the sin which there is in us all, even in the best; of the real sincere sorrow for sin and purpose of amendment, with which all should continually acknowledge their sins before God; of the abundant pardon and help which there is held out for every earnest penitent, through the Atonement, and Intercession, and Grace of our Blessed Redeemer, by the hand of our Father of mercies, who is Infinite in power as He is in love. And thus it will lead you (which it is the object of the Sentences in general to do), through a sense of the 'goodness of God,' to true repentance and acknowledgment of sin, with full trust in Him for pardon.

The place whereon we stand, we know, is *holy ground*, though the Presence which hallows it is unseen. Should not the recollection of this, from the moment when we cross the sacred threshold, banish even the *appearance* of irreverence? Should it not teach us *to keep our foot when we go to the house of God?* The few moments which we may have for silent reflection will not more than suffice for the due observance of the precept, *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself, and be not as one that tempteth the Lord.* And it will often be, as with David, that while we are thus musing, the *fire is kindled within, and when, at the last, we speak with our tongue, it is, as we ought to speak, out of the abundance of the heart.*—Rev. H. Howarth, 'The Liturgy as It is,' p. 20.

and help ; and to grateful thanksgiving and praise to Him ; and so to restoration to His favour in Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

Turn thus these Sentences, and the practical thoughts suggested by them, to good use. And be sure that, the more you do so, the more will your mind be attuned indeed to the solemn service in which you are about to engage, and the more therefore will you offer it as a real worship, with a fervent spirit and an intelligent mind. And so will it cease to be to any an irksome, because heartless and unmeaning form. Yea, our public service shall become indeed the sweet united communing of habitually penitent, trustful children with their Heavenly Father, acceptable to God in Christ Jesus, and full of blessing to themselves.

But, as the second point, it must be remembered also that, if these Sentences when read or listened to are to produce their full effect, and wake up in the mind the thoughts and feelings which they are intended to call forth, those thoughts and feelings must be more or less habitual at all times to the mind. Life and worship are united inseparably. While prayer should produce its purifying and elevating effect upon our life : our life, reversely, will give its tone to, and be imaged in, our Service of Prayer. If, then, anyone finds that, after all, he cannot fix his thoughts on these Sentences, cannot really enter into the train of ideas and feelings which should be, as has been said, suggested by them, then let him go one step further back, and see whether there is not a fault in his

¹ 'On the whole, the Sentences and Exhortation may be viewed in the light of a varying capitulum or text, followed by a brief and unvarying homily on the parts and objects of ordinary worship, especially on the necessity of repentance as a preparative for it. It should accordingly be listened to as suggestive of mental prayer, or desire for what may be called the proper graces of Divine service. And its effect, as designed to awaken a penitential feeling in particular, will be greatly promoted if either the eye is allowed to glance over the passages of Scripture on which it is founded, or the mind be duly trained habitually

daily life. To move along our daily path in life conscious always of our great weakness, and our many faults, varying with our dispositions and circumstances and age; continually acknowledging them on the instant before God; sorrowing over them as grieving a Father of Love, and as having made necessary the Incarnation or birth in the flesh as Man, of our blessed Redeemer, and his Death upon the Cross to make atonement for our sins; yet looking up to heaven in constant reliance for pardon through the merits and intercession of Christ, and for strength in the future through the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart; grateful for the long-suffering of God, through which His just punishment of our sin has been withheld, and continued warnings and opportunities of repentance have been afforded us throughout life; soaring up ever and anon for a moment on the wings of the spirit to breathe a purer atmosphere, and thence descend with a more devout and loving and holy spirit to the duties and pleasures of daily life,—this is so to live as to have our heart continually being prepared to worship God here and through eternity; to be acquiring that spirit which will only need at any moment to be called out into energy; to have the chords of the heart so strung for heavenly music, that a single sentence from God's Word may attune them at once to pour forth the harmony of sincere and fervent confession and prayer, with entire trust in the mercy of God, through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ our Lord.

to associate those passages with it. When thus used, far from being a superfluous feature in our offices, much less an objectionable one, or alien to their proper spirit, it may well be deemed a help to devotion, than which nothing more effective or more true to the mind of the Church has in these later ages been devised; it is an exact and well weighed invitatory to the act of public worship, such as would not have discredited the thoughtful pen of St. Leo (from which indeed it seems partly to have proceeded), and is in singular accord with the ritual mind of the earliest age.'—*Freeman*, i. 326.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EXHORTATION.¹

THE opening Sentences, which were considered before, are designed (as was said) to *attune* the mind generally before engaging in the Service of Public Prayer. The Exhortation, which is to be considered now, is intended rather to *direct* the mind in engaging in it, and *incite* it, and instruct it as to the several elements which are to enter into the Public Service of God in his House of Prayer. Accordingly, it sets forth, one by one, the parts of a complete Service of Prayer. For while it all along places sincere, trustful *Confession* of sin, to which the opening sentences have attuned the mind, as the first and chief duty of those who meet together to worship God, and the essential preliminary to the acceptable performance of the other parts of Divine worship,² it reminds us also incidentally,

¹ The minister is ‘to say’ the Exhortation, ‘saying’ (according to some) being the ritual term for reciting on one musical note, or monotony. ‘Singing’ implied musical inflections.—See Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

² When a congregation of Christians *assemble and meet together* in the House of God their Saviour, they appear before him in a twofold character. For first, they are the creatures of His hand: they *kneel before the Lord their Maker*: they supplicate Him whose goodness gave them *life and breath*, and whose unwearyed Providence also gives them *all things*. (Acts xviii. 25.) This is the *first* relation in which we stand to the Being whom we worship: and if this were the *whole*, our worship might be begun in a very different form and spirit. The service of the Church on earth might commence, like that of the Church above, in the language of praise and rejoicing: saying “Amen:

with a view to show the need of Confession as the essential preliminary for all the parts of the Service of God, that we are also to render *thanks* to Him for His great mercies to us, to *praise* Him in the thought of the glorious attributes of His Being; to *hear His most Holy Word*, and to ask in *petition* for those things temporal and spiritual of which we stand in need. In other words, it reminds us that our service should consist of the blended elements of Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, and Praise, combined with the hearing of God's Word read and explained.¹

And these several parts of the Service, it will be observed, are but the expression of those various feelings which the opening Sentences naturally awaken in the mind. For the

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever." (Rev. vii. 12.)

'But we, alas! are *sinners*, and must carry into our devotions that solemn warning, that *God heareth not sinners*. We must cleanse our hands, and purify our hearts (St. James iv. 8), or ever we can *come boldly to the throne of grace*. To us God saith, as to His people in old time, *Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes* (Is. i. 16). For the worshipper of God, who is at the same time a doer of His will, *him, and him only, He heareth*.'—Rev. H. Howarth, 'The Liturgy as It is,' p. 18.

¹ Speaking of the various Daily Services in the earlier Church, and the offices designed for them, Mr. Freeman remarks, 'All this was done once, we hardly know when: all we do know is that it is not done now. In one country alone, in one form alone, does the ancient Western office really survive. Psalmody, Scripture, responsive Canticles, Preces, Collects, the media of Europe's ancient worship, banished from all other lands, have taken refuge in the Church of the English Communion. The English Church is in this matter the heir of the world' (i. p. 279).

'How the various offices were combined in those two Daily Services which we have now, he explains in another place. 'Thus, by retaining, *once for all*, such elements (e.g. the introductory part and the Psalms and Scripture) as were common to all, and subjoining, in their natural order, features peculiar to the several offices, a single whole would result, recalling sufficiently for the purposes of continuity the older forms' (i. p. 292).

consciousness of sin, and sorrow for it, will find its natural vent in *confession* of it before God, and in *petitions* for the pardon of sin past, and for God's grace to enable us to overcome it in the time to come. And the assurance of His forbearance in the time passed, and of His willingness to forgive sin through the Atonement and Intercession of Christ, will find its expression in *Thanksgiving*; while it will lead up to the thought of God, as a God of infinite goodness and mercy, as well as of infinite wisdom and power, and so call forth our hymn of *Praise*. And through these thoughts and feelings we shall be led to desire to *read and hear* more fully the *Word of God*, that we may know our sin more clearly, and sorrow over it more deeply; that we may have more full assurance of God's long-suffering mercy; and that we may have revealed to us more distinctly both the scheme for man's redemption, and the infinite goodness from which it springs.

The Exhortation, with the Sentences, Confession, and Absolution, was added (as was noticed before), as an introduction to the Service, and preparation for it, in the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI. The Daily Service began before (as our present Service for the Holy Communion does), with the Lord's Prayer. But it was only to the Morning Service that the present introductory part was prefixed in 1552. It was at the final revision in 1662 that the introductory part was ordered to be added to the Evening Service as well.¹

¹ 'Until 1662 the Evening Service in our Prayer Book uniformly began with the Lord's Prayer, as was the case in the edition of 1549. For no notice had before been commanded to be taken by the printer of the part prefixed in 1552 to the Morning Service; though the first rubric at Morning Prayer, equally inserted in 1552, and never afterwards omitted, shews that it was meant to be always repeated here likewise.'—'The Book of Common Prayer, illustrated by W. K. Clay, p. 42.

The idea of placing an Exhortation at the beginning of the Service is not only in accordance with what has been done in other parts of the Prayer Book, e.g. in the Communion and Baptismal Services, and in the office for the Visitation of the Sick, but it is also in harmony with the spirit of the old Services of the Church. 'It does not indeed appear,' writes Mr. Palmer,¹ 'that an Address was repeated before the office of Morning Prayer in early times. Omitting, however, all consideration of the value of the Exhortation, of its judicious position just before the Confession, and of the right which the Church of England possessed to establish any such formulary, it can be shown that an Address to the people at the beginning of the offices is by no means unwarranted by the ancient customs of the Church.² The Liturgies of the Churches of Gaul and Spain always prescribe an Address to the people before the more important part of the Communion Service: and we have placed this Address in the same relative position in our offices.' And this custom was observed in the earlier English offices. For in them there was 'a public Exhortation *in English*, followed by a form of Confession and Absolution before Communion, in use at least in parts of the English Church.' And also, 'a form of exhortation to Confession and Repentance, preparatory to Absolution, was a regular part of the old English Visitation of the Sick. And on Ash Wednesday, and the first Wednesday in Lent, there was an Address or Exhortation which formed the Lections at Matins.'³

¹ 'Origines Liturgicæ,' i. 212.

² St. Cyprian, in the third century, mentions it as the custom in his time for the minister to prepare the minds of the brethren by an address made before proceeding to prayer: 'Sacerdos ante orationem præfatione præmissâ parat fratrum mentes.'—Quoted by Comber, 1, 2.

³ Freeman, i. 332. 'In the Spanish or Mozarabic office for Matin Lauds, an address from the priest to the people, exhorting them to seek from God those things which are necessary, is prescribed.' 'Interleaved Prayer Book.'

Indeed, these addresses in the earlier offices seem not only to have suggested the idea of our Exhortation, but also to have supplied in part the materials from which it was composed. For much of our present Exhortation appears to have been taken from an old Exhortation before Communion, and from that for the first Wednesday in Lent, which last again was drawn from a Homily of St. Leo. In the latter occur the following words: 'For although, dearly beloved, there is no time not full of the Divine gifts, and we have always access allowed us, through God's grace, to His mercy, yet now ought all our minds to be moved more zealously, when,' &c.¹ And, in the Exhortation before Communion, the words occur, 'that ye be of your sins clean confessed, and for them contrite, that is to say, having sorrow in your hearts for your sins. Also ye shall kneel down upon your knees, saying after me, "I cry God mercy."² 'The Exhortation,' Mr. Procter concludes, 'was thus constructed partly from the preceding Sentences, and partly by adaptations from previously existing forms.'³ And though we should be inclined to describe it rather (with the rest of the introductory part), as an original composition of the framers of our Prayer Book, we cannot doubt that it was framed by them with the old forms, as well as the words of Holy Scripture, in their view.

There are in this Exhortation, it will be found when it is studied, three main points. *First*, there is the declaration of the duty of confessing sin in general. Then, *secondly*, there is the assertion of the special duty of making it when we meet for Public Prayer, and a notice of the chief objects with a view to which we meet. And, *thirdly*, there is the direction to the assembled congregation to join the minister in drawing near to God in penitent confession of sin.⁴

¹ *Freeman*, i. 324.

² *Maskell*, 'Mon. Ritt.' iii. 348.

³ Page 206.

⁴ It has been justly remarked that 'if the Exhortation is said from

And if now these three parts of the Exhortation are considered somewhat more in detail, it will be seen that in the first part there is an affectionate salutation, after the manner of the Apostolical Epistles, as from those who are bidden to watch over, and have a care for, the souls committed to their charge, to those who are their brethren in Christ, members of the same great family in Him.¹ And then the duty of con-

memory, and with the face turned towards the congregation, it becomes much more expressive of the intention with which it was placed here, than when said as a mere form for passing away a few seconds while the congregation is settling into a devotional frame of mind.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

¹ 'The Apostolical salutation with which it opens breathes a spirit which in these latter days can be but rarely felt or witnessed. It carries us in imagination to a time when the whole company of them that believed were of *one heart and one soul*; and *Brethren, dearly beloved*, were the current and natural expressions of a real and highly prized relation between the pastor and his flock. Partly indeed, it may be, from the impossibility of anything beyond ministerial intercourse with the several portions of an overwhelmingly numerous flock; but partly also, it is to be feared, because the *love of many* towards the pastoral office and character hath waxed cold; the warmth of these simple words does often seem exaggerated and out of place, where there is no corresponding sentiment to call it forth. They are like a sunbeam glancing from afar into a pale and icy region, whose very aspect tells that it was born in another clime, and that half its vital heat is chilled and dispersed by the frigid atmosphere into which it has found its way. Yet we would hope that even now these primitive expressions of Christian brotherhood, uttered with plain and earnest, though unpretending sincerity of heart, might occasionally strike a chord which should vibrate with some of that sweetness that once belonged to it, when touched by the hands of *holy men of God*, even of them that *had seen the Lord*.

'As a *memento* of such times and such feelings, however changed, our Church did well to retain them: perhaps also as seeds for the future revival of the same spirit, under more favourable conditions of pastoral care and intercourse; when Christ's people shall again *know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and admonish them; and shall esteem them very highly in love*, not merely in personal preference; not as being Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos; but in

fession is urged, as enforced in sundry, i.e. many and diverse places of Holy Scripture.¹ And the sins and wickedness² which we are to confess are described as 'manifold,' in the language of the prophet Amos (v. 12), as being various in their character, and circumstances, and degree; so generally does one sin bring many others in its train. And these we are bidden to acknowledge in ourselves and confess before God. We are not to attempt to *dissemble* them, as pretending that we have not committed them, nor to *cloak* them by

reverence to their character as *ambassadors for Christ; even for their works' sake.*'—*Rev. H. Howarth*, p. 22.

¹ Such as, especially, Ps. xxxii. 5, 6: 'I said I will make confession concerning my transgressions to the Lord: And Thou—Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin: Selah.'—*Kay's Translation*.

And again, Prov. xxviii. 13: 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.'—Cf. Lev. v. 5; xxvi. 40-42; Numb. v. 6, 7; Is. lv. 7; 2 Chron. vii. 14. See also the Sentences preceding the Exhortation.

² 'Some have objected to the juxtaposition of many of the words having the same meaning, such as "sins and wickedness," "dissemble and cloke," "assemble and meet together," &c. It will be observed, however, that they are to a large extent Saxon and Latin equivalents: and while, on the one hand, they explained each other in an age of comparative ignorance, they serve also to intensify the meaning. Many of the words regarded as similar will be found to vary in meaning the more they are examined.'—*Bromby*, p. 21.

With regard to the frequent use in English of duplicate words in this way, a writer of the present time remarks:

'Of later books, the most remarkable store of these duplicates is to be found in the Book of Common Prayer, which is also the book that must be considered as, on the whole, the most genuinely national sample of English in existence. These duplicates abound so in every part, that the only difficulty is in selection. In the Preface we find this: "that upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made." In every page examples meet the eye: "acknowledge and confess," "dissemble nor cloke," "assemble and meet together," "requisite and necessary," "pray and beseech," "remission and forgiveness," "adorned and beautified," "enterprised nor taken in hand" "image and similitude."—*"Quarterly Review," July 1873*, p. 159.

fair and specious excuses, remembering that we are in the presence of Almighty God, to whose eye all things are open, and who is our Heavenly Father, longing to see His children return, and openly and honestly acknowledge their faults. But, on the contrary, we are to confess them, and that in the spirit of a heart *humble*, as being humbled by the thought of the degrading and rebellious character of sin, and therefore *lowly*, brought low, even to the ground,¹ *penitent*² for sin past, and *obedient*, with earnest resolves, by God's help, to amend for the time to come, and live in all things according to God's Holy will.³ And this we are to do, *to the end that*, as a result of our true confession, we may obtain forgiveness of our sins so confessed, through His infinite mercy and goodness; *goodness*, which makes Him love us even when rebellious children, and *mercy*, which inclines Him to forgive us all our

¹ "Observe the distinction between "humble," as conveying a more *immediate*, and "lowly," a more *abiding* sense of unworthiness under the recollection of sin."—*Bromby*, p. 21.

² " "Penitent" follows in reference to deep and childlike sorrow for sin against a "Heavenly Father": and "obedient" implies the future *will* to amend."—*Bromby*, p. 21.

³ "Remarkably concise as this Exhortation is, we cannot fail to be struck with the reflection, how every consideration of weight, and pertinent to the end in view, is included in it. Every word seems a sentence, and every sentence a sermon. We are reminded what it is that moveth and encourageth us to this duty, viz. *the Scripture*; the voice of God, and not of man. We are cautioned against the danger of regarding it in a light and unimportant point of view; for that in every one of us, yea, even in the best, our sins and wickednesses are *manifold*. We are entreated to beware of *aggravating* our sin by any attempt at dissimulation or concealment: remembering that *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*: that therefore it is our wisdom and our understanding, to *confess* our sins before His face, and to let our confession be made in such a spirit as alone can render it acceptable and effectual; that humility and lowliness, penitence on account of the past, and obedience for the time to come, are, each and all of them, the indispensable qualifications of the heart, which must be present in order that the virtue of confession *may have its perfect work*."—*Rev. H. Howarth*, p. 23.

sins, on our true repentance, for the merits of the perfect atonement of our blessed Lord.¹

Thus, the first part of the Exhortation urges the duty of confession of sin to God, while it shows the spirit in which it should be offered, and the result which may be looked for as following upon it. The second part directs the worshipper as to the duty of offering it more especially when we meet for the public worship of God. At all times, indeed, the moment we are conscious of having sinned, we should turn at once to God, and ask pardon from Him.² But this we should do in a more emphatic and comprehensive way when we meet in the solemn assembly for public prayer. For then we should think of the sins of others—of the nation, family, Church, to which we belong—as well as of our own; and of our own sins in their influence on the Church at large, as well as on ourselves. And we are about (as we are reminded), to engage in *Prayer* for blessings spiritual and temporal, in *Thanksgiving* and *Praise*, as well as to listen to God's holy Word. And all these offices of religion require to be preceded by confession of sin. For how can we hope to obtain God's blessings if we are in rebellion against Him through unconfessed, unforgiven sin? How can we venture to offer thanksgiving and praise to Him with a heart chilled by indifference, or defiled by transgression against His holy law? How can we profitably hear God's Word, when sin unrepented of, and unacknowledged, closes the ear, and drives away the Holy Spirit, who alone can make the word fruitful to those who hear it?

¹ 'There may be said to be one idea throughout the Liturgy: forgiveness to the penitent.'—Dr. Lloyd, Bishop of Oxford: Letter in Churton's 'Memoirs of Joshua Watson,' p. 155.

² 'And, oh! whosoever I am overtaken with any sin and wickedness, either in thought, word, or deed, give me Thy grace that I may immediately, with hearty repentance, turn to Thee again, nor suffer me to lie still in the stony security of sin.'—Lydney's 'Prayers.'

There is thus more in the words of this part of the Exhortation than a mere declaration of the several elements which enter into a Service of Public Prayer. There is this, but it comes in quite incidentally, the several elements of the Service of God being mentioned with a view to show how necessary confession is as a preliminary to all the rest. 'These four duties,' writes Comber¹—i.e. Petition, Praise, Thanksgiving, and Hearing of God's Word—'are so many arguments to prove confession especially necessary in the solemn assembly, because they are all of them then and there to be performed, and yet without penitence none of them will please God.'

'Who can do any of these well that hath not confessed his offences and repented of them? But this will be more plain by beholding the particulars.'

'First, we are to give God thanks for His benefits; but unless we see our sins, we may think we need not a Saviour, or are not much the better for spiritual mercies, and that we deserve those that are temporal. How can he praise God for His Son, who will not come to Him? for His grace, that will not use it? or for the hopes of glory, that never seeks after it?'

'Second, we should glorify His name by publishing His excellency in hymns and anthems of thanksgiving. But how can the impenitent sinner commend that power which he sees not, or that holiness which he loves not, or that mercy that he seeks not after, or that love which he hath no experience of? The praises of such are next to mocking the Almighty, because their hearts cannot go along with their mouths in the glory they seem to ascribe to Him.'

'Third, we come to hear His most Holy Word; but if our hearts be not prepared by true penitence, we shall be neither wiser nor better; for sin unrepented of stops the ears of a man, hardens his heart, and fills his mind with presumption and security; it banisheth the Holy Spirit by filthiness and vain

¹ i. 47.

thoughts, and puts men rather upon hating and despising the good word of God than embracing it and submitting to it. What part of Scripture can profit such? Its exhortations they heed not, its comforts they need not, its threatenings they fear not, its promises they value not; they hate its instructions and despise its reproofs; so that the messenger of God may say in his Master's language, Hos. vii. 4, *What shall I do unto Thee?*

'Fourth, we come to pray for what is needful for our bodies and souls. But what prince will accept a petition from the hands of a rebel that disowns not his treason? Much less will the King of heaven receive his request whose very prayer is abominable (Prov. xv. 8). If such a man ask for his body, he asks that which he intends to spend on his lusts, and so he seems to desire God to become the provider for them, who will not minister fuel to this flame unless He intend to consume you. If He lengthen your life, continue your health, or increase your wealth, you will turn the edge of these against God who bestowed them on you, and grow more confident to despise Him to your own ruin; so that if He have any mercy for you He will not hear you. But as to begging anything for the soul, it may be questioned whether he that lives in sin believes he hath such a jewel. But if he do believe it, he is so careless of it that he will either ask nothing for it, or however nothing heartily, because he apprehends not his danger, nor sees his wants, nor cares he whether they be supplied or no; and what good will the repetition of the words of prayer do to such a person? In fine it is most evident that though repentance be at all times necessary, yet it is then indispensably so when we go about these holy duties, or we shall not only lose the benefit of them, but meet a curse instead of a blessing; therefore, as you love

your souls and hope to please God in these duties, despise not this necessary Exhortation.'

And now, in the third part or concluding words, the Exhortation *prays*, nay more, *beseeches* us (according to the expression so frequently employed by St. Paul), to draw near to the throne of grace, i.e., to God as He sits upon His throne in heaven, where He delights to receive the prayers of His children and pardon their sins and give them His help.¹ And all, *as many as are present*, are besought to draw near. For whereas, under the old dispensation the priest only might enter the holy place, there to offer the sacrifice of the people, we now, through Christ our Great High Priest, have access to God, and are permitted, all of us, to draw near with boldness and confidence to the Most High, so only we do it with entire humility and deep reverence, and trust for our acceptance before God to the infinite merits of our Blessed Lord alone. In this spirit we may all draw near, accompanying the minister, he leading, as appointed by God to lead the prayers of the people, and all joining him, inwardly in spirit with a heart purified by sorrow for sin,² and outwardly with an humble voice, everyone audibly but soberly making the public confession of his own sins,³ and uniting in the general confession of the sins of the congregation and of the Church at large;

¹ 'The conclusion of this Preface, *Wherefore, I pray and beseech you to accompany me with a pure heart*, i.e. a sincere one, *to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace*, agrees entirely in sense and partly in words with that pathetic declaration of St. Paul, *As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*' (2 Cor. v. 20). —Archbishop Secker, 'Six Sermons on the Liturgy of the Church of England,' p. 30.

² "Pure," not absolutely of sin, but of guile and deceit (compare St. James, iv. 8, with Ps. xxiv. 3, 6, to which St. James was probably alluding). —*Bromby*, p. 22.

³ Our Church's direction in this particular is grave, and conforms to ancient rules. St. Cyprian advises thus: 'Let our speech and voice in

that so the hearty, penitent acknowledgment of sin may be borne up from the spirits of the united people to the throne of the God of grace.¹

The examination of the Exhortation in itself has occupied us too long to allow of the addition of more than a few very brief remarks upon it in a practical way. It should be borne in mind generally that what was said before of the opening Sentences applies to the Exhortation with equal or even greater force. Give the Exhortation, therefore, due weight. Regard it as preparing the mind for drawing near to God, especially in public prayer, directing us as to the general spirit in which we should approach Him, as to the manner in which we should join in the public service in His House of Prayer, and as to the parts of which our Service should be composed. Consider how that Exhortation, in its connection with the preceding Sentences, shows us that Service taking its rise out of the penitential confession of sin as the prevailing element, and as pervaded by the twofold thought of the guilt of sin and the duty of repentance on the one hand, and of God's infinite mercy in Christ to the penitent, on the other. The experience

prayer be with discipline, still and modest: let us consider that we stand in the presence of God, who is to be pleased both with the habit and posture of our body, and manner of our speech: for as it is a part of impudence to be loud and clamorous, so on the contrary it becomes modesty to pray with an humble voice.'—*Bishop Sparrow*, p. 13.

¹ Comber remarks that, besides this first and principal use of this exhortation, 'some pious souls have found out another, viz. when they use the Common Prayer in their private devotions, to turn it into a preparatory prayer before the Confession, with very little variation, in this or the like manner: "Almighty God, who hast commanded us in sundry places of Thy holy Word to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness, and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of the Divine Majesty: give us grace to confess our sins with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by Thy infinite goodness and mercy, and the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen." —i. p. 36.

of many will bear witness to the difference which they have found in the reality and fervour of their prayers, according as they have drawn near to God prepared by meditation upon Him, and on their state before Him; on the guilt of sin and the duty of confession of it; on the parts of a complete Service of Prayer to Him, and the spirit in which they should be offered; or have entered hurriedly on God's solemn Service with an unprepared mind, with no aspirations heavenward, with thoughts and feelings centred on the things of earth.

Yea, there is more than this. For the preparation for our united service in God's House here is a preparation for our eternal worship amid the company of the blessed. Look on for a moment into the future far away. Time has ended. Earth has vanished. Earthly worship is no more. But we are standing in the courts of heaven. Thousand thousands of angels are worshipping there. And we, trained and guided by the Services of our Mother Church on earth, have our spirits all attuned and practised to join in the eternal worship of the bright spirits around the Throne. So shall our preparation for our earthly Service have fitted us for the worship which shall be in heaven for ever.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONFESsION.

It is with the 'General Confession' that the worship of God by the congregation strictly begins. The 'Sentences' and the 'Exhortation' were preparatory to the worship rather than worship itself. And as the Sentences are especially designed to attune the mind to a sense of sin and trust in God's mercy, while the Exhortation aims at directing the mind in the confession of sin, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of it through the infinite goodness and mercy of God, the public worship of God begins strictly with the actual confession of sin to Him. We have already noticed the fitness of confession as the commencement of the worship of God, in order that our sin may be pardoned, through our penitence and acknowledgment of our fault, before we can hope to hear God's Word profitably, or are prepared to address to Him our Praise or Thanksgiving or Prayer, 'lifting up holy hands to the Lord.'¹ 'It is agreeable to godliness,' it has been said, 'that, as often as we appear before the Lord, before all things we should acknowledge and confess our sins, and pray for remission of the same.'²

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 8.

² 'The Holy Scriptures assure us that sin unrepented of hinders the success of our prayers (Is. i. 15; John ix. 31); and therefore such as would pray effectually have always begun with confession (Ezra ix. 5; Daniel ix. 4, 5), to the end that, their guilt being removed by penitential acknowledgments, there might no bar be left to God's grace and mercy.'

And this penitent Confession of our sins should be made daily by us afresh. 'Our daily sins,' writes L'Estrange, 'exact a daily confession. Our daily wants teach us, as our Saviour prescribed us, to say "Give us this day our daily bread." The Lord's mercies are "new every morning"; so should our prayers and thanksgivings be, new in practice though the same in form.'¹

Our Confession is styled a *general* Confession, 'in contradistinction probably to private forms,'² because in it we confess not our own individual faults only, but the faults also of those connected with us, and of our congregation, and of the nation, and of the Church, and of mankind at large.³ In

For which reason the Church hath placed this confession at the *beginning* of the service, for the *whole congregation* to repeat after the minister, that so we may first be witnesses of each other's confession, before we unite in the following service. And this, as we learn from St. Basil, is consonant to the practice of the primitive Christians, who (he tells us) in all churches, immediately upon their entering the house of prayer, made confession of their sins before God, with much sorrow, concern, and tears, every man pronouncing his own confession with his own mouth.'—*Wheately*, p. 113.

And Bishop Sparrow writes: 'We begin our service with confession of sins, and so was the use in St. Basil's time. And that very orderly. For before we beg anything else, or offer any praise or lauds to God, it is fit we should confess and beg pardon of our sins, which hinder God's acceptance of our services. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Psalm lxvi. 18).—'Rationale,' p. 13. See also *Palmer*, i. 213.

'Of all the attributes of God, there are none so proper for our contemplation, when we are about to confess our sins unto Him, as His omnipotence and goodness. The former fills us with a reverential awe and holy fear, the other with a filial love, a reviving hope, a humble confidence. As He is *able* to inflict on us the punishment which our sins deserve, so He is no less *willing* to save, and ready to forgive us, if by hearty repentance and true faith we become fit objects of His mercy.'

—*P. Waldo*, p. 13.

¹ In edition of the Anglo-Catholic Library, p. 101.

² *Freeman*, i. 310.

³ 'The form adopted is so simple and yet so earnest that it would be

it each humbly and sorrowfully acknowledges before God the sins of others as well as his own. Only it should be carefully remembered that we are to make it particular and general at once.¹ We may not forget, on the one hand, that we are to confess the sins which belong to us as members of a society, or as part of the body of mankind, reflecting on those sins which we cannot fail to note in our community, or among men at large; and so giving a definite meaning to our words. But on the other hand, we are not to make *only* a general confession of sin, declaring ourselves to be sinners as other men are, without confessing our own specific faults. Accordingly, though the Confession 'is expressed in general terms, referring to the failings of human life which are common to all men, and

difficult to imagine any state of mind in which it might not be adopted. Afflicted in heart, broken in spirit, the humblest sinner can feel that if, in sincerity, he thus acknowledges his guilt, thus confesses his utter departure from the ways of holiness, he has declared what his conscience would most urge him to express. The happier worshippers, on the other hand, who come to the House of Prayer less in the spirit of fear than of love, will willingly adopt every sentence of this Confession. For the remembrance of their past lives furnishes them with numberless reasons for acknowledging that they have erred and strayed from God's ways like lost sheep; and their humble sense of present infirmities, and of their entire dependence on Divine grace, convinces them that, without the presence of the Sanctifier, there is no health in them.'—*Stedding*.

'How beautiful is this Confession, if rightly understood. The child and the old man, the rich and the poor, strong and sickly, may each unburden their conscience, as they remember their peculiar temptations to which they have yielded, whether *untruthfulness, fretfulness, luxury, envy, vice, or impatience*.'—*Bromby*, p. 24.

¹ 'The Confession is termed *general*, to distinguish it from a *special* confession of particular sins, such as is spoken of in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick. That the whole congregation may be able to join in the same form of confession, it is necessarily framed in general terms. But each individual, as he repeats it, ought to reflect on the sins which most easily beset himself, and especially on those which he has committed since last he was at church. And that he may do this the more readily, it is expedient that he should have carefully searched his conscience *before* he comes to church.'—*Humphry*, p. 91.

which may and ought to be confessed by all, without descending to particular sins, of which some of the congregation may not be guilty,¹ we ought, I conceive, to give at once a general and a specific meaning to the words we use, applying them in our hearts before God both to the sins of men at large, and to the sins of which we may be specially guilty ourselves.

The Confession is to be said 'by the whole congregation.' And that with good reason. 'For,' to use the words of Hooker, 'could there be anything devised better, than that we should all, at our first access to God in prayer, acknowledge meekly our sins, and that not only in heart, but in tongue: all that are present being made earnest witnesses, even of every man's distinct and deliberate assent to each particular branch of a common indictment drawn against ourselves? How were it possible that the Church should any way else with such ease and certainty provide that none of her children may, as Adam, dissemble that wretchedness, the penitent confession whereof is so necessary a preamble, especially to common prayer.'²

¹ *Procter*, p. 208.

² 'Eccl. Pol.' V. xxxvi. 2. 'How different,' it has been truly said, 'would our public worship be from what it is, if here and elsewhere this direction were complied with!'

'How much I wish that even for once the many voices in this congregation could be brought to unite together in audible prayer and praise!

'Because I think, my Christian friends, that if this were done once, you would not *need* to be persuaded to it any more; you would all feel the difference so much that you would do it always. The service would seem to you—and be—so much more interesting, and life-like, and real than it had ever been before, that you would of yourselves keep up the habit.

'Then, indeed, a stranger coming into our congregation might report that God was among us of a truth; and he would see that we really believed it. But as things are, how lifeless and cold our Service too commonly appears, compared at least to what it should be! And I am sure the evil of this comes back upon ourselves—on all of us, both

Further, the manner in which the Confession should be said is distinctly marked. It is *to be said of [by] the whole congregation after the minister.*¹ That is, the minister is to say each clause, and then the people are to repeat the clause after him.² The manner of saying the Lord's Prayer is different.

ministers and people. We know how strongly the conduct of others affects us; how our own earnestness is either increased or chilled by that of others round us. And if we hear no sound of prayer or praise on any side; if all around us seem unconcerned spectators or hearers only of a worship that is not theirs—that is but offered *for not by* them—it is impossible that our own devotion should not be chilled and checked. By an apparently, if not a really, apathetic silence, Christians put a decided hindrance both in their own and their brother's way.

'Let us of the Protestant Reformed Church look to this matter. We do not make such appeals to the outward senses as other churches do; but we must not forget that men *have* senses, and feeling, and imagination, and natural human sympathies; that all these must be won over to religion; that through these the majority of men are, in fact, attracted to one form of religion, and a sound sober form of worship. Sobriety, surely, need not be dull. A "reasonable" service, may be a "*living*" service as well. I would not add a single form, a single grace or ornament to what our Prayer Book warrants; but I would make our Service all that it was meant to be, and that it might be if our people would.

'And I believe, for my part, that there is infinitely more to touch and stir the heart in a truly congregational worship, than any merely material aids can furnish; that there is more to awaken devotional feeling in the blended sound of many human voices uniting heartily in the simplest words of prayer and praise, than we could find in any decorative pomp or outward ceremonial.'—*Dickinson*, p. 28.

¹ 'Bishop Cosin erased the word "after" in this rubric, and substituted "with;" but the original word was carefully restored, showing that a distinction was intended between the two words in their ritual use. "*After* the minister" means, that each clause is to be said first by the minister alone, and then repeated by "the whole congregation" alone—i.e. while the minister remains silent, as in the case of a response after a versicle. "*With*" the minister means simultaneous recitation by him and the congregation together, and is ordered in the rubric before the Lord's Prayer.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

² 'A provision this' (Mr. Bromby observes), 'especially necessary at the Reformation, when the people were unable to read,' p. 22. It may be questioned whether the method would be fitting now.

That is to be said 'with him,' the people repeating the clauses simultaneously with the minister. In the Scotch Prayer Book the rubric runs, 'A General Confession to be said by all that are present, *after or with* the Deacon or Presbyter.'¹

And the Confession is to be said by the congregation, '*all kneeling.*' It is noted by Bishop Cosin that kneeling is the fit gesture for humble penitents: and being so, it is strange to see how, in most places, men are suffered to sit rudely and carelessly on their seats all the while the Confession is read: and others that be in church are nothing affected with it. They think it a thing of indifference, forsooth, if the heart be right.

'The 18th Canon does direct that "all manner of persons then present shall reverently kneel upon their knees when the General Confession, Litany, and other prayers are read testifying by those outward ceremonies and gestures their inward humility."

'The gesture of kneeling here and elsewhere is not only a mark of personal humility and reverence, but also one of those acts required of everyone as an individual component part of the body which forms the congregation: and to neglect it is to neglect a duty which is owing to God and man in this respect as well as the other. We have no right to conspicuous private gestures in a public devotional assembly: nor are the gestures which we there use (in conformity to the rules of the Church,) to be necessarily interpreted as hypocritical because our personal habits or feelings may not be entirely consistent with them. As the clergy have an *official* duty in church, irrespective of their personal character, so have the laity. It may be added, that a respectful conformity to rules enjoining such official duties may often lead onward to personal reverence and holiness.'²

¹ *Keeling*, p. 6.

² 'Annotated Book of Common Prayer.' 'Kneeling appears to be

The idea of introducing such a Confession, and placing it at the beginning of the Service, may well have been taken from the custom of early times. ‘To begin Morning Prayer with confession of sins, I may call the Catholic doctrine of the primitive Church,’ are the words of L’Estrange. “*De nocte populus surgens, antelucano tempore domum precationis petit, in labore, tribulatione, et lacrynis indesinentibus facta ad Deum Confessione,*” saith St. Basil. “Early in the morning, at break of day, the people rising go straight to the House of Prayer, making confession of their sins to God, with much sorrow, sobs, and tears.” Which custom, lest it should be thought a peculiar of his own Church, was, he tells us, consonant to all other Churches. Nor is he only a witness for Confession, but for confession so qualified as ours; the congregation repeating the words after the minister, “*Suis quiske verbis resipiscentiam profitetur.*” Everyone pronounceth his own confession with his own mouth.¹ And even before the

regarded among all nations as the appropriate attitude of supplicants. Though not prescribed in the Mosaic Law, it was probably the practice of the Jews from the most ancient times. The earliest mention of it in Scripture is Psalm xcv. 6: “Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” It is especially mentioned that Solomon knelt at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 54; see also Isaiah xlv. 23; Daniel vi. 10). This posture was also used by our Lord (St. Luke xxii. 41), by His disciples (Acts vii. 60, ix. 40,) and by the early Christians in general, except on Sundays, and in the interval between Easter and Whitsuntide, at which times they testified their joy by standing at the public prayers of the Church.—*Humphry*, p. 91.

¹ L’Estrange, ‘Alliance,’ p. 105. See Freeman, i. 67. ‘Few parts,’ he writes, ‘of the existing Daily Services of the English Church have been more severely criticised, on the score of supposed novelty and departure from the customs of the Church elsewhere, than the penitential introductory part of them. And yet not only have we, as has been long ago pointed out, an unquestionable warrant for this of a general kind in the testimony of St. Basil already cited: but, on further investigating the introduction before us—doubtless the very one to which he alludes, and probably Apostolic—we are furnished with as full and exact a pre-

Christian era, such a confession of sin entered into the plan of the old Jewish prayers, with some of the expressions in which part of the confession of the early Eastern Church very much coincides.¹

In the Revision of the Roman offices made by Cardinal Quignonez in 1536, the Confession was placed at the beginning of the Matins office. And so also, on second thoughts, it was assigned the same position in our own Book of Common Prayer by the Revisers of the Book in 1552.²

cedent as could be desired. Objection has been made, and, perhaps, still oftener felt, first, to our having a set confession at all in this position daily, and twice a day; and next, to its being of so decided a character. To the latter objection we may safely leave the Church of St. Basil's time to reply. And in answer to the former, we have but to point to the Eastern offices. Every day, and twice a day at least,—before each of those ordinary Services which correspond precisely in their nature and intention to our own,—has the Church of the East, probably from the very beginning, poured forth a profoundly penitential prayer, containing a full confession of "sins, iniquities, and infirmities," and full acknowledgment of need of pardon and healing, together with many a "Lord have mercy upon us." In short, whoever will compare our form with the ancient Greek, or the still older Jewish prayers, will find the topics as nearly as possible the same, while the expression is greatly intensified.—*Freeman*, i. p. 72.

¹ A comparative table will show this.

JEWISH 18 PRAYERS.

EASTERN OFFICE.

5-6. Have mercy on us, O our O most Holy Trinity, have mercy Father, for we have trans- upon us: purify us from our gressed: Pardon us, for we infirmities, and pardon our have sinned. sins.

7. Look, we beseech Thee, upon our Look down upon us, O holy One. afflictions.

Heal, O Lord, our infirmities. Heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (*thrice*).

Freeman, i. 66.

² Other reasons are also apparent for the change. In the first place, the full effect of the dissolution of monasteries was making itself felt by ritualists, and a penitential prefix to the Service was considered more appropriate for a mixed congregation than the previous mode of

Our own form of Confession here may perhaps be considered as an original composition of the framers of our Book of Common Prayer. It coincides with the very language of Holy Scripture from beginning to end,¹ and the various passages bearing on the subject were evidently before the minds of those by whom the Confession was composed. They may too have had in their view some forms of private confession in use at the time.²

And now, if we go on to consider the Confession here, we shall see at once that it is divisible into three parts. *First*, there is the penitent confession of sin committed in time past. *Then*, *second*, there is the prayer to God for forgiveness of our sin. *And third*, there is a petition for strength to overcome sin in the time to come. We may go on to examine these three parts somewhat more in detail.³

opening it which was suitable for communities professedly spending nearly their whole time in the religious portion of a Christian's duty. And, in the second place, a relaxation of the rule about private confession made it expedient to place a public confession and absolution within the reach of all day by day.—‘Annotated Book of Common Prayer.’

¹ The correspondence between parts of the Confession and Romans vii. 8-25, will appear from the following comparative table:

CONFESSiON.	ROMANS vii. 8-25.
We have followed too much, &c.	Sin wrought in me all concupiscence.
We have left undone, &c.	The good that I would I do not.
We have done those things, &c.	But the evil that I would not, &c.
And there is no health, &c.	In me dwelleth no good thing.
But thou, O Lord.	O, &c. who shall deliver me?
According to Thy promises.	I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

² Two forms are especially referred to; called ‘The Orison of David,’ and ‘The Orison of the Priest and the Penitent.’ See Freeman, i. 321; Procter, 206. The confession should also be compared, as a whole, with that of the Strasburg Liturgy of Pullain. It is given entire in Procter, p. 47.

³ The Confession here should be compared with that introduced in

The Confession opens, in the first of the three parts, by raising up the spirit in an address to God as He sits on His throne in heaven, *Almighty*, and therefore able to the utmost to punish and to pardon sin, and also as a *merciful Father*, who watches over us with tenderest care, and longs to embrace us His children on our return, and forgive our faults.¹ Then it goes on to declare generally that we have *erred*, ignorantly

the Communion office, on which Dean Goulburn writes: 'As regards the contents of this confession, it is instructive to compare them with those of the form in the Daily Morning and Evening Prayer. They who do so will not fail to perceive how much deeper is the tone of humiliation in the prayer before us (the Confession in the Communion Service). To specify some particulars. God is here addressed as the "Judge of all men," a feature of the Divine character which is not brought out in the ordinary confession. The sins confessed are designated by the strong term "wickedness." Not content with the simple setting them forth, we hint at their aggravation in the words "which we have from time to time *most grievously* committed." They are alleged to have been "in thought, as well as in word and deed." They are said "most justly to provoke God's wrath and indignation against us." We profess the very memory of them to be "grievous unto us, the burden of them intolerable." And finally, we emphasize the cry for mercy by twice repeating it: "Have mercy upon us," most merciful Father. There can be no question that the daily confession implies much less of a lively concern for sin, much less of profound abasement. And there is a great lesson here which we do well not to overlook. Our Blessed Lord, in His solemn words to St. Peter, recognises two sorts of spiritual cleansing: one total, and of the entire person; the other partial, and needing to be daily renewed. There are sins of infirmity —dust which we collect on our feet in our walk through the world, and which needs to be daily wiped off by confession, and by seeking fresh pardon through Christ's blood. The daily confession, then, is for the washing of this dust from the feet. But more solemn periods of humiliation are desirable, when we may review with stricter scrutiny a longer period of our career, and abase ourselves more deeply in God's sight. And when shall these periods rather be, than before we draw near to the Holy Table, to communicate with our Lord's Passion, and to partake of remission of sins, and all the other fruits of it?'—Dr. Goulburn on the 'Communion Service,' Part iii. lect. iii.

¹ 'If fear will move our hearts, here is represented His terrible power: if love will work upon us, here is discovered His unspeakable goodness:

or thoughtlessly,¹ and *strayed* further away wilfully, from the care of the Good Shepherd, and the ways in which He would have us walk, and the sweet pastures in which He would make us feed.² And this because *we have followed too much*,

and what heart can resist both? His Almightiness is first: but if the terror thereof seal up thy lips, let the hope of His fatherly pity and compassion open them again. Learn humility and true contrition from the first, and faith and hope from the latter, which are excellent mixtures in a penitent heart, and the best dispositions in the world for a hearty and prevailing confession.'—*Comber*, i. 59.

¹ 'In our lesser, sudden, and unobserved sins, we *err* and step aside. Vain thoughts, rash and idle words, light and foolish carriages, make our way crooked. And these happen so frequently, that at best we go on but in contorted spiral lines, which is far from the straightness and evenness of our rule: when these are done out of ignorance, they are called *errors*, and though we think them small in kind, yet they are formidable in their numbers, and next to infinite. But besides these little wanderings, we stray further, and stay longer, we fall into greater transgressions and evil habits; these are open forsaking of God's ways, and a plain passing over those bounds which God hath set to us. And thus malice and envy, lust and drunkenness, pride and cruelty, covetousness and oppression (especially when by frequent repetitions they are become customary), may be called *straying from His ways*.'—*Comber*, i. p. 59.

² 'The Church chooseth to express our departure from God in the language of the Holy Ghost: for God and His Son Jesus Christ are compared to the Shepherds, and we to the sheep of their pasture (Ps. xxiii. 1; c. 3, 4). By our sins we become lost sheep, as David and those in Isaiah confess themselves to be. But Jesus comes to seek and save us (Matth. xv. 24, Luke xv. 4). Alas! how frequently do we forsake the safe fold, the pure streams, and the green pasture which God hath provided for us, and wander into a dry and barren wilderness, where we want all true comforts, and are exposed to a thousand evils.'—*Comber*, i. 60.

'The comparison with which this prayer opens is derived from the last verse of the cxixth Psalm: "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost": and is peculiarly applicable to a number of persons who have been following each their own devices, like a flock of sheep dispersed in various directions. This feature of the comparison is indicated by the prophet Isaiah: "All we, like sheep, have gone astray: we have turned *every one to his own way*" (liii. 6).'—*Humphry*, p. 92.

Mr. Freeman refers the words of the Confession more immediately to

in wrong degrees, and at wrong times, and in wrong manners, and on wrong principles, *the devices and desires*, the thoughts and inclinations, *of our own corrupt hearts*, and thereby *have offended against*, acted contrary to, the holy *laws of God*, Creator and Lord of all: laws written on man's conscience, and in nature, and made known through Apostles and Prophets divinely commissioned to declare them, and even by the Son of God from heaven Himself: laws perfectly holy, so that we are without excuse in disobeying them; and laws which, if observed, would have converted the soul, and led us into the path of holiness, and through that of happiness and peace. And then we declare our offences more specifically to have consisted of sins of *omission*, for that *we have left undone those things which we ought to have done*, worship of God, study of His holy Word, unselfish care for our brethren, watchfulness over ourselves; and sins of *commission*, for that *we have done those things which we ought not to have done*, transgressing again and again in thought, and look, and word, and act. And, as a result of this, we declare that *there is no health in us*; that the inner being is morally diseased;¹ and that we have

a private form. 'One of these, called "the Orison of David," opens with the same idea as ours: "O Lord, . . . be intent unto us, who all as sheep have gone astray, who are all dying creatures." Now this seems to fix for us in a deeply interesting manner the allusion intended in "we have erred and strayed like lost sheep." It is not a mere quotation from Ps. cxix. or Isaiah liii., but rests, as these passages themselves probably do, on the archetypal fact of David's sin in numbering the people, which is the subject of this "Orison." See 1 Samuel, xxiv. 17. And this is the probable key to the profoundly penitential character of our Confession, that it is thus based upon a private form of such deep intensity.'—Vol. i. p. 319.

¹ 'The sicknesses and diseases of the body are by the Holy Ghost used to represent the sinful distempers of the soul. Infectious sins are likened to the plague: filthy and odious iniquities to leprosy; such as disquiet the conscience to pains and wounds: heresy is the gangrene (2 Tim. ii. 17), envy the consumption (Prov. xiv. 30), of the mind.'—Comber, i. 69.

no power in ourselves to help ourselves, and regain a condition of spiritual health and strength.¹

And now, in the second part of the Confession, when we have thus laid open our state before God, we go on to pray of Him first to *have mercy upon us*,² who are involved in misery³ now and for ever by our sin; and to *spare us* from the present and eternal penalties of it, since we confess it in penitence;⁴ and to *restore us*⁵ to His favour, and a state of purity, on our true repentance;⁶ and this, *according as He has promised*

¹ “There is no *health* in us”: i.e. as the word doth often signify in Scripture, no salvation or *means of help* among the sons of men.—*Comber*, p. 92. See passages referred to in his note. And cf. Is. i. 6, and Ps. xlii. 15: “Who is the *health* of my countenance” (Bible version); where ‘*health*’ expresses ‘the “healing virtue” which goes forth from God’s countenance, and rests upon the sorrowing countenance of the Psalmist’ (Hengst.). ‘It is in the LXX. *σωργία*: Jer. salutibus.’—*Kay*.

² ‘Observe the climax in the three petitions, beginning with *have mercy, spare, restore*: that is, *judge* our faults pitifully; *remit* the punishment which they deserve; *bring back* the lost sheep to the fold.’—*Bromby*, p. 24.

³ The *ταλαιπωσ* of Rom. vii.

⁴ St. John 1. 1. 8. Ps. xxxii. 5.

⁵ ‘Nor will He interpret it impudence if, after we have prayed for a removal of the guilt, and a deliverance from the punishment, of our sin, we put up a further and greater request, even to be restored; for it is not a single mischief which sin doth us. Besides the stain it leaveth, and the wrath it deserveth, it doth alienate the mind of God from us, and ours from God: so that, after David had prayed against the fore-mentioned evils, he also desires to be restored (Ps. li. 12). It will not suffice Absalom to be brought home from banishment unless he may see his father’s face (2 Sam. xiv. 32). So if a truly pious man were sure never to smart for sin by any positive evil, the bare privation of the Divine love would be intolerable, and its suspension a grievous burden: and he that truly calls God Father will not be satisfied without a restoring to His favour, which sin had deprived him of. The word *restore* is also used for the rebuilding a ruined and depopulated city (Dan. ix. 25, &c.), which is the sad emblem of a soul laid waste by sin, which defaceth its beauty, dismantles its strength, and brings down its highest and noblest faculties, fitting men for converse with low and base things, making a heap of a defenced city.’—*Comber*, i. 78.

⁶ ‘Among the features of a better mind in man, which have survived

pardon to all mankind *in Christ*, as both the mean through whom, by our union with Him, our pardon is obtained, and also Himself the declarer of it to us.¹

And then once more, in the third part of the Confession, looking on to the future, and remembering that there is no health in us, i.e., that 'we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves,' we go on to pray of our *most merciful Father*² that

the great moral wreck of the fall, is this, that we are always disposed to relent towards an offender who ingenuously confesses his fault and takes upon himself the whole shame and blame of it. Now this feature of the human character is a dim reflection of the infinite compassionateness towards penitent sinners which there is in the heart of God, in virtue of which, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

'But then it must be remembered that God, inasmuch as He is a searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart, does not accept as confession, as we are obliged to do, the mere acknowledgment of the mouth. And confession of sin with the heart is by no means so easy a thing as we are apt to imagine. The mere telling forth our faults presents little or no difficulty. What is so difficult—so impossible except by Divine grace—is the honestly taking to ourselves the full blame and shame of them.

'Now a confession in which there is no mortification of self-complacency, in which the sinner does not lie low in his own eyes, though he may express himself to that effect, is no confession in the eyes of God. But, on the other hand, whenever there is a real self-abasement in the inner man, a real willingness to take upon oneself the blame and shame of sin, a readiness to consent to its exposure before all the world, if God's love and grace could be magnified thereby, here God deals with us, in consideration of Christ's finished work, much on the same principle (though of course on a much larger scale of compassionateness) as we should deal with an offending brother, who, throwing himself upon his knees before us, should confess an injury and implore our forgiveness.'—Dr. Goulburn on the 'Communion Office,' Part iii. lect. iii.

¹ The word *in Christ*, ἐν Χριστῷ, has a special force, as expressing the sphere in which the goodness of God towards man especially works. It is those who are 'in Christ,' brought into spiritual union with Him, whom the Presence of God specially overshadows, and who are in a peculiar way the recipients of God's pardon and grace.

² 'God is a most *merciful Father in Christ Jesus*, on whom the penitent is taught to look: and because He intercedes for us, we ask it

He will grant us power in the Holy Ghost, *for Christ's sake*, to live hereafter a life *godly*, in respect of our duties towards God, *righteous*, in the observance of all the duties which we owe to our brethren, and *sober*, in a constant self-control exercised upon the thoughts, and words, and acts, and every part of our own inner life.¹ And this we ask, not so much for the sake of our own happiness here and hereafter, but with a view to *the glory of God's Holy Name*, the All-Holy Being of God as revealed to us, to advance the glory of which should be the one highest object of man's life on earth.²

And now it remains only to consider what is the result of having made this confession sincerely before God. It is two-fold. On the one hand, to have offered it as we ought must have shown us to ourselves, more or less, as we are. We must have thought over the sins which are prevailing in the world, and the sins of our own hearts and lives more particularly, and discovered somewhat of the guilt of them before God; we must have felt humble, sorrowful, penitent, on account of them, and have desired not only to be saved from the penalty, but, far more cleansed from the guilt of them, and endued with power to resist them, and so restored in holiness to the favour and love of God. We must have resolved, God helping us by the Holy Spirit, to overcome them in the time for His sake through whom God is merciful, and we have a promise we shall prevail (St. John, xiv. 18). "No man rightly calls upon God the Father, but by the Son," writes Gregory Neoces.—*Comber*, i. 84, 85.

¹ 'Prayer for future amendment,—towards God, towards our neighbours, towards ourselves—adopting St. Paul's similar divisions, but in an inverted order, for St. Paul was not addressing God as we are, when he said (Titus ii. 12) "we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." —*Bromby*.

² 'It is to be observed that this prayer does not end with the usual intercession, "through Jesus Christ": but this is implied in the words, "for His sake." "To the glory of Thy Holy Name" must not be regarded as a doxology, but must be connected with "live," as Christ said, "herein is my Father glorified." —*Bromby*.

to come, otherwise we cannot have offered our confession acceptably. Nay, can we otherwise have offered any confession at all? Must we not have been simply tempting God?

To have made our confession then, faithfully, will have shown us more or less to ourselves. And secondly, it will have secured God's forgiveness for us, according to the words of the inspired Psalmist, 'I said, I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so Thou forgavest the wickedness of my sin.' We shall have, so far, fulfilled our part; and God, we may be sure, will have fulfilled His, and wiped away our sin for the infinite merits of the Atonement once made for our sins by our Blessed Lord upon the Cross.¹

Only reflect. How far do we fulfil our part? The advantage to ourselves of making confession of our sins is clear: the pardon of God consequent upon it, freely given for Christ's sake, is secure. But do we really confess our sins? Here is the important question. Do not let us deceive ourselves in this. We should put the question strictly to ourselves, How do we make our confession in God's House? I need not say that the remainder of our service must have been imperfect, must

¹ "While we see that repentance and forgiveness of sin are closely joined together, let us not suppose that our sins will be forgiven *because* we repent of them. Let us not suppose that repentance is the prevailing, the procuring, the meritorious cause of our forgiveness. This would be to place repentance in the place of Christ. It is His blood alone "through which we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." If our sins be pardoned, it is *because* Christ died for us. His death alone is the price of our pardon: and by faith alone do we obtain an interest in this blessing. None, however, but the truly penitent will ever really partake of it. Hence springs the necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness. Hence Christ has said "Except ye repent, ye shall all perish;" while He, who has wrought in us a godly sorrow for our sins, will plead His own merits in our behalf, and will not suffer us to perish under the unpardoned guilt of those transgressions which He Himself has taught us to hate and to forsake."—Cooper's Sermons: Sermon on Acts v. 31.

have been more or less out of tune, if we have, wilfully or thoughtlessly, failed to be present at the Confession altogether. But we should reflect whether we offer the Confession habitually with an humble, penitent, earnest spirit, thinking of men at large as well as of ourselves; distinctly conscious of our sins before God; desiring pardon, and trusting for it to Christ's merits; really longing and resolving to live for the future to the service and glory of God in love.

These things should be the subject of serious thought. It is, indeed, the duty of God's ministers to preach constantly the full free grace and pardon of God to the penitent in Christ. But to be truly penitent, to know our sins and sorrow for them, *as sins against God*, and then to confess them faithfully, and resolve to watch and strive and pray against them for the future—this is no easy task. Our world revolves, we know, with amazing rapidity. But we perceive not its motion, for we and all things revolve together. And just so it is in our spiritual life. Moving amid a fallen world, we do not perceive our fallen state, as we should do if we were brought into contact with beings all pure. Then, further, sin, by its very nature, blinds the mind; and Satan aids the illusion, and strives to paint all fair before our eyes, or at least not to let us see evil in its true deformity. And, in this way, we little discover our sins, or feel the sinfulness of them. Only when we fix our eyes on God All-Pure, and on our Blessed Saviour, in the example of His perfect life; only as we pray earnestly for the grace of the Holy Spirit, and feel that we are to be as temples wherein He dwells, and yield ourselves to His motions within, convincing us of sin, and kindling in us a horror of it, and raising us up to a higher life—only so can we attain to a real knowledge of sin, and sorrow for it.¹ Therefore we

¹ See this admirably stated in Archer Butler's Sermons: Sermon IX.
'on Self-delusion as to our State before God.'

should try ourselves by this test. We should consider what reality there has been in our private confession morning and evening, which should have prepared us to join in the General Confession in the congregation at the House of Prayer. After our attendance at worship in God's House, we should put to ourselves the question, What sincerity was there in my confession of sin to-day? And if conscience condemns us, then we may well use those means which have been suggested. We should study God's Word, especially the Life of our Divine Lord, in order that our sin may stand out more clearly revealed to our view in its true guilt, as we compare our life with what is declared to us as to God's Will. And this will lead us to more sincere confession of sin. And more: it will lead us to pray heartily for the grace of the Holy Spirit to enable us to see more clearly our infirmities, that we may watch against them; our follies that we may amend them, our sins that we may sorrow over them and turn from them for the time to come. Thus we shall grow to know more, and to feel more deeply, what sin is; and we shall make our humble confession to Almighty God with the understanding and with the heart. And we shall be able to take to ourselves those words of comfort, 'I said I will confess my sins unto the Lord: and so Thou,' O Lord, for Christ's sake, 'forgavest the wickedness of my sin.'

And this—it only remains to add—we should do *now*. Now is the accepted time. We may not put off repentance and confession to a later time. Each day it becomes more difficult. And, in the anguish and disquietude of disease and affliction, the soul cannot calmly lay open her sins before God as she would wish to do. Still less shall we be able to do so if the hour of death and judgment comes upon us unprepared. There will be no room for repentance when eternity has begun. We say that there will be no confession as a part of

our worship in heaven, where there shall be no more sin to confess. But let us remember with this, that, if confession of sin finds no place there, we must have sorrowed over it, and confessed it before God, and obtained pardon for it in Christ, and turned from it by the Holy Spirit's grace, now, in life: or else we cannot enter heaven. Oh ! if anyone to whom these words come is conscious in himself of any cherished sin, or feels that he is not indeed living in the love of God and obedience to His Will ; if he knows that he could not pass to heaven as he is—let him, *at once*, confess his fault, and ask for pardon, and seek that help from God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, which assuredly cannot be sought faithfully by any in vain.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ABSOLUTION.

AFTER the general Confession follows the general ‘Absolution or Remission of sins,’ which, with the other parts of the opening portion of our Service (as has been remarked before), was not in our Prayer Book when first put forth.

The Absolution is essentially connected with what has gone before, and naturally follows in this place. The Sentences *teach the duty* of making sincere confession of sin, and assure us of God’s willingness to forgive it on our true repentance. Then the Exhortation *urges us* to make such sincere confession, and seek God’s forgiveness. Then the Confession *expresses* and carries up to heaven our penitent acknowledgment of sin, and our trustful supplication for pardon to God. And then the Absolution *pronounces God’s forgiveness* of sin to all those who have sought it earnestly, with the requisite conditions of hearty repentance and true faith.

The introduction of such an Absolution in the Service at the revision of 1552 was no novelty, only it was introduced with a new application and in a new place. For in the earlier offices it was ‘an interchange of acknowledgments between the persons officially performing the Service (for to them it was confined,) of any imperfections in the discharge of their duties in the whole preceding Services of the day.’¹ And ac-

¹ Freeman, i. 103. ‘There is a trace of this idea remaining in our present form: “that those things may please Him which we do at this present;” i.e. without doubt the service which we are offering, or which

cordingly (as was natural when it had this special application), the Absolution was placed, in the Roman and in the Eastern offices alike, at the end of the Service of Evening Prayer. But the Confession and Absolution of the old Prime and Compline offices had, by Cardinal Quignonez (whose revision of the Roman offices in 1536 furnished in some measure the idea of our own), been prefixed to the Matins office. And, on the revision of our Prayer Book in 1552 they were assigned the same place in our Morning Service correspondently. And now our Daily Service has an Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution at its beginning similar to those with which the more immediate Service of the Holy Communion begins.

Our present Absolution, in the form which it takes in this part of the Service, seems to be derived from three main sources. First, Holy Scripture itself supplies directly a great part. And the whole is so entirely Scriptural, that the Bible may be viewed as the source from which all is ultimately drawn. But secondly, the old English form in use at Compline seems to have contributed some expressions; though that more fully accords with the Absolution in use in the office of the Holy Communion.¹ And thirdly, one English and one foreign modern form were apparently before the minds of the Reformers when they were composing our present form. For in Marshall's Primer (1535), in a prayer at the end of the Litany, there occur the words, 'Lord God, which dost not suffer sinners to perish, and to die in their works, but rather wilt that they shall convert and live, we humbly pray Thee to forgive us now while we have time and

we are about to offer. The Prayer Book translated into French for the use of the Channel Islands (1549 and 1552) well translates it "le culte que nous offrirons." And Comber paraphrases: "That is, our absolution, our prayers, and all the other duties which we do at this present perform in His House." —*Ibid.* p. 309.

¹ For the form, see Procter, p. 193.

space.' And again, some of the expressions in a declaratory Absolution, which forms part of a Latin Service Book published for the use of the German refugees in this country, about the year 1550, by John à Lasco, a Pole, an intimate friend of Cranmer, are so strikingly like those in our own Absolution, that they may be thought to have suggested the phraseology of our own.¹

There are, it will be observed, in different parts of our Prayer Book, three different Forms of Absolution, which may be described as more *declaratory*, more *precatory* (or *intercessory*), and more *authoritative*, severally, according to the circumstances in which they are respectively employed. For the form of Absolution in the Visitation of the Sick (to be said if anyone 'humbly and heartily desire it') pronounces the forgiveness of sin more authoritatively, and with more direct personal application, for the comfort of the penitent, in the words, '*And by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee.*'² Then that in the Communion Service assumes rather the precatory form, '*Almighty God . . . pardon and deliver you;*' for when all are kneeling in deep self-abasement before God, in sincere sorrow for sin, and yet in humble reliance on His mercy, nothing more seems needed than that the minister should beseech God to bestow upon them that pardon which they so earnestly desire. Whereas, in the Daily Service, the priest rather *declares*, as to those who may need to be reminded of it, God's willingness to forgive sin to the truly penitent, and *pronounces* pardon from

¹ Many of the letters which passed between our Reformers and John à Lasco will be found in Gorham's 'Reformation Gleanings.'

² On the History of the Form of Absolution, 'Absolvo te,' Professor Plumptre writes (Sermon on Confession and Absolution, p. 16): 'The late date of the so-called Sacramental Absolution, the authoritative "Absolvo te," is a point not to be lost sight of in considering the legitimacy or expediency of its more frequent use. There is absolutely

Him to all those who have sincerely confessed their sins to Him. 'But all these several forms,' writes Bishop Sparrow, 'in sense and virtue are the same.' Forms and expressions drawn from earlier systems must be understood according to the tone and spirit of the system into which they are introduced.

And thus there arises the general question as to what the exact idea of an absolution is. Now there are on this point (it seems) two extreme views. One would represent an absolution simply as a declaration of God's readiness to forgive sins to the penitent, while the other would consider it (I conceive) as a form by which the priest confers on the truly penitent forgiveness of sins by a power delegated to him by God. And our Church, as it seems, with great wisdom, steers her course between the two extreme views. On the one hand she does not merely declare, for the comfort of the penitent, God's desire for man's salvation, and willingness to forgive, but she also proclaims, not the power only, but the

no proof of its existence prior to the thirteenth century. So far, indeed, as one may argue from the absence of any reference to it, it was not known in the time of Peter Lombard (A.D. 1164). In the interval between Lombard and Aquinas it seems to have become common; and the latter writer seizes on it as the "form," i.e. the one indispensable, essential part of the Absolution. It still remained, however, as a formula sanctioned by the authority of his teaching, rather than by that of the Church, until first by Eugenius IV. (A.D. 1431-47), and then by the Council of Trent (Sess. xiv.), the "doctrina scholasticorum" became the "doctrina Romanensium," and the figment of an over-systematising brain was stereotyped for, at least, Latin Christendom. A formula of which this is the history, that bears upon it the stamp of the time of Innocent III., without the shadow of primitive or catholic antiquity, has surely but little claim on our regard.'

"As for the ministerial sentence of private absolution," Hooker writes, "it can be no more than a declaration what God hath done: it hath but the force of the prophet Nathan's absolution, God hath taken away thy sin." ('Eccl. Pol.' vi. 8.) See also Dr. Goulburn, 'Communion Office,' Part iii. lect. v.

commandment, given by God to His ministers, to 'declare,' or make known generally, and 'pronounce,' or authoritatively convey from Him to men particularly, God's most gracious promise of free forgiveness of sins to men upon their sincere repentance and reliance on the merits of Christ's death. And yet, on the other hand, with all this, in order not to give even the appearance of transferring in any way to the minister the power of forgiving sins which belongs to God alone, she bids her ministers, as a general rule, simply pronounce for all the truly penitent and believing, *God's* absolution and remission of their sins. Thus the minister does not merely *declare* God's willingness to forgive; nor yet does he *confer* pardon, even as by any delegated power (for he is said to have power to declare and pronounce forgiveness, not to confer it); but he does authoritatively convey the pardon which God gives; God's forgiveness following, to the truly penitent,¹ the pronunciation of it by those whom He has commissioned to convey it authoritatively from Him, and thus fulfilling the word spoken by His ministers in His Name. What, therefore, we do in saying the Absolution daily is this: God's ministers in it declare and convey the message of God's forgiveness, as His instruments and envoys, to those who truly repent and faithfully receive the promises made to the faithful penitent in the Gospel of Christ.²

This, then, is the meaning of the Absolution. Now, before going on to consider the form given in the Daily Service, it should be observed in passing that the rubric requires the Absolution to be said 'by the Priest alone, standing.' It

¹ For absolution to take effect, 'all that is needed is that there be fit, i.e. truly repentant recipients of it: that secured, wheresoever it touches, it blesses and heals.'—Freeman, i. 317.

² 'I take both the rubric and form to imply that it is an *effective* form, conveying as well as *declaring* a pardon to those who are duly qualified to receive it.'—Wheately, sec. iv.

is to be said by the *Priest*: for at the last revision the word *Priest* was substituted for *Minister*, to express distinctly that the Absolution was only to be said by one in the orders of a *Priest*.¹ Not as if this were any ground for self-exaltation to the ministers of Christ. Far from it. Rather it must inspire them with deepest awe in the thought of the high and solemn office entrusted to them as appointed to speak on the most important of all subjects in God's Name. And it is to be said by the *Priest alone*: where the word 'alone' may, perhaps, partly be intended to mark that it is to be said by the *Priest* only, and not, as the Confession and the Lord's Prayer, e.g., are, by the *Minister* and people together—a distinction (let it be remarked by the way), not universally observed. But it was probably designed rather to mark that the plan of the old offices, in which the *Priest* interceded for the people and the people for the *Priest*, was, so far, given up.² And it is to be said by the *Priest standing*, that being the position thought most suitable for one speaking authoritatively in the name of God;³ while the people continue *kneeling*, as receiving in humble gratitude God's forgiveness of their sins.⁴

¹ See on this, Wheatly, p. 119.

² Mr. Freeman remarks that, 'This is very commonly, and without the slightest reason, supposed to design the exclusion of a *Deacon* from saying the Absolution. It is infinitely improbable that the possibility of his doing so ever crossed the Revisers' minds.'—Vol. i. p. 310. There is a somewhat different account of the meaning of the word 'alone' given by L'Estrange, 'Alliance,' p. 109.

³ 'And because he speaks it *authoritative*, in the name of Christ and His Church, he must not kneel, but stand up. For authority of Absolution see Ezek. xxxvii. 12, Job xxxiii. 23, Numb. vi. 24, 2 Sam. xii. 13.'—Bishop Andrewes's Works, Anglo-Catholic Library. 'Two Answers,' &c.

⁴ 'After the Confession, when the minister comes to the words of Absolution, bow down your head, and say softly, in your heart, "Lord, let this pardon, pronounced by Thy minister, fall upon my soul, and seal thereunto the forgiveness of all my sins."—Sherlock, quoted by Mr. Carter, 'Doctrine of Confession,' p. 237.

And now to pass on to the consideration of the form itself. It is not necessary to dwell on the words of it at any length. It will be seen that it is framed in three parts. *First*, there is the statement (which is but the echo of the words in the prophet Ezekiel, 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord, and not that he should return from his ways, and live,' xviii. 23; cf. xxxiii. 11), that God, who, as Almighty, is able, and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ is willing, to save all who will truly turn to Him, desires only our well-being, and has both empowered and commanded His ministers to bear the message of pardon from Him, according to the words recorded in St. John xx. 23.

Then, *secondly*, this His absolution from the guilt, and remission of the penalty, of sin, is pronounced from God upon all who truly repent, and rely on the atonement of Christ declared in the gospel. And each one, as he kneels before God, with his sins confessed to Him, full of sorrow for them as committed against God, and yet full of hope that they may all be forgiven through the infinite mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, may draw in to himself in the Spirit the free pardon to the penitent believer conveyed by the mouth of God's minister from God in heaven: a faint foretaste of that which shall one day be, when the Saviour Himself pronounces the words, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee: enter for ever into the joy of thy Lord.'

And *thirdly*, since God promises forgiveness to all who fulfil the requisite conditions, and to them alone, the congregation are urged to implore of God the gift of true repentance, and of that Holy Spirit through whom only a real living faith in our Blessed Saviour, and the merits of His death, is maintained,¹ in order that the gift in Christ of pardon and acceptance

¹ Repentance and faith (it will be noted) are given as the two conditions of forgiveness in the Absolution for the Communion Service: 'Who has promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him.'

and strength may be bestowed on them abundantly now, and be increased continually more and more as they grow by Divine grace in true penitence and living faith. For, if we have this true repentance and the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling in us, and drawing us close to our Lord in faith and love, then God's forgiveness is vouchsafed unto us, and 'that which we do at this present'—the Service in which we are engaged, together with all our present life—is made acceptable to Him, as offered by those who are pardoned in Christ. And we can go forth in the hope of leading a life henceforth more pure from sin, more holy to God, more free from those faults which we have now confessed, and for which we have sought pardon in Christ—a life leading on to joy eternal in the presence of God in heaven.¹ Faith and repentance lead to pardon in Christ. And pardon brings with it grace and strength. And grace brings present acceptance with God, and a life of progressive holiness in the fear and the love of an All-Merciful God. And this progressive sanctification makes us fit for heaven, 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.'

And now, from these details, the mind can turn for a few moments and rise to those high and glorious truths which are embodied in the form which has just been considered.

Think, *first*, how it conveys and involves throughout the great central truth on which all our hopes are based, namely, that all our sins are fully, freely pardoned in Christ. 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted and live?' (Ezek. xviii. 23) is the declaration of God's desire for our salvation made under the old dispensation. And now to us,

¹ This alteration of the old form, 'May He lead you to eternal *life*,' and substitution of 'we may come to His eternal *joy*' instead, and the more elevated turn thus given to the last clause, 'not improbably represents the joyful interchange of versicles and responses which followed the old Absolution: V. "God, Thou wilt turn again and quicken us." R. "And Thy people shall rejoice in Thee," &c.'—Freeman, i. 312.

under the new dispensation, is revealed the scheme whereby man's forgiveness is reconciled with divine justice. For we can look in hope, nay in assurance, of entire forgiveness of all our sins, through the one perfect atonement of our Divine Lord.¹

Then think, *secondly*, how this promise of forgiveness in Christ is ordinarily conveyed to us: how God has specially bidden His ministers to convey it to His Church authoritatively from Him throughout all time.² St. John (xx. 22, 23) records the very act by which, and the words in which, our Saviour thus commissioned His first ministers after His resurrection from the grave. And St. Paul writes to the Corinthians that 'God hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath "given to us" the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, . . . and hath "committed unto us" the word of reconciliation.' (2 Cor. v. 18, 19). And very clearly, if we consider it, is God's tender love for man shown in this. If we know what it would be to have one bring the message of full forgiveness direct to

¹ 'These words, coming from the most unworthy lips, have testified to hundreds and thousands of hearts, in every time since they were adopted into our Service, of a true God, an actual Deliverer, in whom it is not a sin but a duty to trust. They have encouraged many humble hearts to hope in Him when all seemed darkest in their own hearts, and in the world, and in the Church. They have borne witness against a multitude of notions coming forth from opposite quarters, Romanist and Protestant, Foreign and English, orthodox and heretical, which slander the character of God and war against the freedom of man.'—Maurice, 'on the Prayer Book,' p. 46.

² 'Christ, to whom alone this commission (of remitting sin) was originally granted, having ordained Himself a body, would work by bodily things: and having taken the nature of Man upon Him, would honour the nature he had so taken. For these causes, that which was His alone He vouchsafed to impart: and out of His commission to grant a commission, and thereby to associate them to Himself—it is His own word by the prophet (Zech. xiii. 7)—and to make them co-operators, "workers together with Him," as the Apostle speaks (1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 1), to the work of salvation both of themselves and of others.'—Bishop Andrewes, Sermon on the 'Power of Absolution,' p. 90.

us from an earthly parent or an earthly king; if we know how much more strongly this message sent by an express ambassador would speak comfort and assurance to us, than any mere general declaration of amnesty and reconciliation could speak, then we can realise how great a blessing it is to one in deep sorrow, full of terror, perhaps just about to pass into the presence of God, to have the message of God's pardon in Christ conveyed by one whom God has specially commissioned to pronounce it directly in His Name.¹

Only it should, *thirdly*, be remembered distinctly what are the conditions on which the pardon is conferred, namely, repentance and faith in Christ. The minister of God can only judge to a slight extent whether these conditions are fulfilled or are not.² He can only pronounce God's pardon to those who do fulfil them; assured that, to those who do, the unfailing promise of God, conveyed by His servant, will be

¹ 'The message finds its way all the more readily to the soul, affects it more deeply, abides in it more powerfully, for being spoken by those who speak it in God's Name, and by the commandment and commission which He hath given them.'—W. E. Jelf, 'Whitehall Sermons,' p. 203.

² 'We are not assuming any judicial power of determining who are the individuals whose sins are forgiven; but, as ambassadors of the ministry of reconciliation, we pronounce generally what the Scripture fully warrants, pardon to the penitent: we teach not the people to trust in any private exercise of our discretion, but to trust in the mercies of the Lord, and in the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin.'—*Dr. Burroughs*, p. 48.

This does not, of course, conflict with the discretion which must be exercised by the minister of God in dealing with individual men, or with that previous examination which he is directed to institute before pronouncing absolution to the sick. He will necessarily be guided by his own judgment as to the cases in which he can encourage those whom he is visiting to look for perfect pardon from God as being truly penitent. And doubtless, according to his own attainments in holiness by God's grace, and the presence of the guiding power of the Holy Spirit in his heart, will be the correctness with which he will act as a guide to others, not giving confidence to those who need rather to be humbled, or making sad the heart of those whom God would have rather to rejoice in the hope of their full forgiveness from Him.

fulfilled too. But on this all turns. Oh! then, as we are in earnest, we should look well to this. We should think how it stands with each one of us. As God's promise of forgiveness to the penitent and faithful is breathed forth in the Service, it should fall on spirits truly sorrowing for past shortcomings, and trusting entirely to Christ's merits for pardon and acceptance with God. If it is otherwise, if any cherished sin, any thoughtlessness, or pride, or self-reliance, any disregard of our Divine Lord, closes our spirits against God, and makes His offers of pardon return without effect, we should at once seek to fulfil the conditions on which His forgiveness depends. Let us strive by all means to attain, and pray earnestly of God to give us, that abiding, active, progressive sorrow for sin as sin, in which true repentance consists. Let us meditate more on the work of Christ, and pray that the Holy Spirit may lead us to more trustful, loving reliance upon Him. Then we may hope that God's promises of pardon will be effectual to us, and our worship of Him in private and public be acceptable to Him, and our path in life be more pure and holy, full of peace and joy even now, a foretaste of our eternal joy.

Let us all think seriously upon these things, the highest, greatest truths of life, the things on which depends entirely our present and eternal peace:—*God's pardon of the faithful penitent, pronounced by His ministers, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.* So may we all heartily say Amen.¹

¹ 'Let not thy Amen be what the Jewish doctors described as "an *orphan Amen*," deprived of its true parents, faith and love. Let it be such an "Amen" as shall declare thy belief to be a reality and thy worship a delight.'—Tuttiett, 'Meditations on the Book of Common Prayer.'

'The early Christians pronounced this word with great earnestness and devotion. "They raised themselves as they uttered it," says one of the Fathers, "as if they desired that that word should carry up their bodies as well as their souls to heaven": a strange contrast to the cold and negligent manner in which the word, so full of meaning and interest, is heard in some of our congregations.'—*Stebbing.*

CHAPTER VII.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

THE first part of the Daily Service closes with the Lord's Prayer. While all the Service is strictly Scriptural, and embodies throughout the spirit of the Holy Scripture, if not its very words, in this part of it the Service goes beyond even that, and lifts up the desires and aspirations of the heart to God in the form of words given for the purpose by our Divine Lord Himself.

According to the original arrangement of the Daily Service, the Lord's Prayer was placed at the beginning of the whole, and again at the beginning of the third or closing part of the Service. And just in the same way the office for the Holy Communion opens with the Lord's Prayer: and again the Prayer stands first in the closing portion of the Service, after the administration to the communicants of the bread and the wine. Now, the introductory elements—i.e. the opening Sentences, the Exhortation, &c.—of the Daily Service having been added, the Lord's Prayer stands as the conclusion, and not the beginning, of the first part.

With regard to the objection not uncommonly made, that the Lord's Prayer is repeated so many times as it is with us wherever the Litany and Holy Communion office are added to the Daily Morning Service, it must be remembered that the repetition is owing to this, that separate offices are now joined in one. As it is introduced twice into the Daily Service, twice into the Communion Service, and once into the Litany,

it results that it is used five times when these three offices are combined.

But this is owing to the combination of the offices. The fault does not lie with those who naturally introduced the Lord's Prayer either once or twice into each office.

That it should take the prominent position assigned to it in each portion of the Service is only fitting in every way.¹ In prayer we are holding spiritual communion with God and worshipping Him. And when can we be so sure that we are praying to Him and worshipping Him acceptably, as when, with an intelligent understanding of the words which we are offering, and a spirit attuned to the spirit which they breathe, we address our Heavenly Father in the form given to His disciples by our Lord Himself? It is the model on which all our prayers should be framed; and therefore it may well stand first, to direct us in the remainder of our prayers to God. It is a Divine summary of all which we should ask of God; and therefore it may well close our petitions, in order that whatever may have been wanting in them may be supplied.²

¹ 'The design with which the Lord's Prayer was first made to preface all ordinary, and perhaps all Communion offices also, was probably not so much (like the penitential prefaces) by way of preparation, as (1) to pay due honour to our Lord's own Prayer, and (2) that it might serve as a *summary* of all the succeeding acts of worship. For such would seem to be the original character of it.'—*Freeman*, i. 328.

² 'The Lord's Prayer,' Dr. Goulburn writes, 'may be regarded in two distinct lights, as a *summary* of prayer, and as a *model* of prayer. In the first of these lights it is the modern fashion to regard it, and under this view it is introduced, not at the beginning, but at the end of prayer. We feel that our prayers are imperfect at best, and greatly need supplementing by some form in which there are no defects: that we omit oftentimes, through haste, or ignorance, or superficiality of mind, to petition for some things which may be most desirable for us: and so at the end of our private prayers, or at the end of our family prayers, we recite the Lord's Prayer, as summing up all that we can want or wish for in a few pregnant words. A curious instance, by the way, of the different line in which modern and ancient thought travel, even where both are equally correct. The Prayer Book never introduces the

And it fitly follows the Confession and Absolution here, as the Prayer which may be offered up by those who have sincerely confessed their sins before God, and listened to His gracious words of absolution authoritatively pronounced. For they can now draw near in humble confidence to God the Father, sure that He accepts and pardons all who are truly penitent in His beloved Son.¹ And no language can be so fit in which to address Him as that given by the Divine Saviour, on whose merits alone they rest for pardon, to whose help alone they look for power alike to desire to do and to do what is right, on whose all-prevailing intercession they rely as He pleads for them at the right hand of God. Inasmuch, too, as it is found when carefully examined to contain, in fact, a summary of belief and practice, to involve the main truths respecting God which we should accept, and the main duties which we should endeavour to perform, it may well take its

Lord's Prayer at the close of any Service: it is always at the opening, or at the opening of a separate section of the office. The Morning and Evening Prayer were formerly opened with the Versicle, and Respond, "O Lord, open Thou my lips." "And my mouth shall show forth Thy praise," which were immediately followed by the Lord's Prayer. . . . Now this position of the Prayer shows that it is regarded as a model rather than as a summary. And this was the view which the ancient Church—and our Liturgy, generally speaking, represents to us the views of the ancient Church—took of the Lord's Prayer. It was a perfect model, to be placed before the mind for imitation, and therefore to be recited in the first instance, or at each fresh section of the Service, and to be reverted to mentally throughout. This is not the only view to be taken of the Prayer, but it is a most true, and just, and Scriptural view. Let us imbibe it, if we have not yet done so, and embody it in our practice. Let us consider how we can bring our own private prayers into a closer conformity with this model.—Dr. Goulburn, 'on the Office of the Holy Communion,' p. 355.

¹ 'Having now confessed our sins, and having heard the message of forgiveness from Him who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore our Father too, we are permitted, as reconciled to God through His dear Son, to offer up the "Children's Prayer," and with the Spirit of adoption to speak to "Our Father in heaven" in the words given us by the beloved Son Himself.'—*Dickinson*, p. 34.

place, as it does in our Daily Service, before and after the middle portion, which consists of the Psalms and Canticles, the Lessons and the Creed, wherein we are taught more fully respecting God, and respecting that which He would have us do in order to fulfil His all-holy will!'

It will be observed that the rubric before the Lord's Prayer runs thus: 'Then the Minister shall kneel, and say the Lord's Prayer; the people also kneeling, and repeating it with him.' As the Prayer Book was originally framed, it was to be said at the beginning of the Daily Service, as at the beginning of the Communion Service, by the minister alone.² But the direction was altered in 1661. And the Church would have all unite in offering the Prayer aloud together, showing that all who are truly penitent have access with confidence to the throne of grace through the atonement and intercession of our Blessed Lord. It only remains for all faithfully to use this privilege, and join in offering audibly from the spirit the Lord's Prayer, as well as in saying heartily the 'Ainen' at its close.³

¹ Tertullian writes: —'In the brief summary of a few words, how many sayings of the prophets, gospels, apostles, discourses of the Lord, parables, examples, precepts, are touched upon! How many duties are at once discharged! The honouring of God in the *Father*: the testimony of faith in the *Name*; the offering of obedience in the *Will*; the remembrance of hope in the *Kingdom*; the petition for life in the *Bread*; the confession of debts in the prayer to *Forgive*; the anxious care about *Temptation* in the call for defence.' —'De Orat.' ch. 9.

'The first three clauses,' Mr. Freeman remarks, 'are a great act of praise, corresponding to and representing all that is more fully done afterwards by the Psalms, Canticles, responsive reading, and the addresses at the commencement, or Doxologies at the end, of Collects and Prayers. The central petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," will have special application to the reception of Divine knowledge through the Lessons and Psalms.' —i. 308.

² *Procter*, p. 211.

³ As to the Doxology at the end, Mr. Freeman observes that 'the rest of the Western Church has it not, as neither had ours till the last

It is not necessary, as indeed it would not be possible within the limits which could be allotted to the work here, to examine the words of the Lord's Prayer in detail. The writer may perhaps be allowed to refer to his Treatise on the Lord's Prayer, in which its connection with earlier Jewish forms, its general structure, and the meaning of the several petitions, one by one, have been considered, with the light thrown upon these matters by writers of former and modern times.

Here it will be enough just to notice that—apart from the opening address to God as 'our Father who art in heaven,' and the Doxology or ascription of praise to God (supposing that to be a genuine part of the Prayer) at its close—the Prayer consists of six petitions. And, according to the rule laid down in Holy Scripture, to which the instincts of our own better nature at once assent, that the glory of God should be the first object always in our view, the first three petitions have reference primarily to God. Then the remaining three Revision. Our latest Revisers (1662) restored it both here, and in the Post Communion, as an act of praise: but not where the Lord's Prayer occurs after the Creed, nor yet at the beginning of the Communion office.

'In what sense this Doxology is to be accounted a part of the Lord's Prayer, seems uncertain. It is rejected by the best critics from the text of St. Matt. vi. Of its Apostolic antiquity, however, as an adjunct to the Lord's Prayer, the office before us, and the Eastern Communion offices, doubtless afford strong evidence. It must be added that the Orientals in this office, and generally, vary from us in inserting in the Doxology the mention of the Holy Trinity. "For Thine is &c., Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, now and always, and for ever and ever." Yet the very ancient Liturgy of St. Mark has it in the form which we use: and so has that of Armenia; which is some evidence of the practice of the East about the year 300, when Armenia was evangelised from Cæsarea. We are thus led to the conclusion that ours is, at least, an equally ancient form of the Doxology.'—p. 109.

In another place he writes that 'it also serves to impart to this Divine summary of our worship, as the General Thanksgiving does to the office itself, the dominant and prevailing aspect of praise.'—p. 328.

have reference more immediately to our own human needs. And in each of the two parts there is a certain order to be observed. In the first part we pray that God in His Being, so far as revealed to us, and in all that specially belongs to Him, may be treated by us with the reverence which is His due. Then, that He may be accepted by us as our spiritual King, of whom men are to be the loyal subjects, trusting themselves to His ever-watchful care, looking forward to being members of His kingdom in heaven for ever. And then that, in proof of our entire allegiance to Him, we may more and more fully obey each even slightest intimation of His will, even as that His will is obeyed constantly, perfectly, in holiness and love, by the bright spirits round His throne in heaven.

And so, in the second part, having our own earthly and spiritual needs more immediately in view, we pray to God first to give us day by day such food, natural and spiritual, as may be necessary to support us in meeting the duties and trials of the day. Then, looking back to the past, we ask of Him to forgive all that has been done amiss by us towards Him, even as we from our hearts forgive others what has been done amiss by them towards ourselves. And then, looking on to the future, and feeling our own weakness, we ask of Him, not to suffer us to be led into temptation, but to deliver us from evil, and from the Evil One in whose subtle malignity the evils which assail us have their source.¹

¹ It has been suggested that the three several petitions in each part of the Prayer may be viewed with a more particular reference to the three several persons in the Holy Trinity; that it is the name of God the Father which we hallow; that it is Christ's kingdom of which we are members; that it is through the Holy Spirit that our wills are brought into harmony with the Divine will. And again, that it is God the Father who gives all to us His children; that all our forgiveness is bestowed on us in Christ; and that it is through the power of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that the Evil One is overcome and not suffered to prevail over us.

It might help us very much in the right use of this Prayer, if we made it, either as a whole or in its separate parts, the special subject of our meditation from time to time. While it is the most precious Prayer that we possess, it is also the one which, from our very familiarity with its words, is most in danger of being used as a mere form. And, in order to prevent this, it would be found a most wholesome exercise to make it occasionally the special subject of consideration for a time, as, e.g., for a week. The separate petitions then might be weighed one by one, and the meaning of the Prayer, as a whole, considered. And in carrying on this examination of it, it should be remembered (as was suggested before), that it is not only a model and summary of prayer, but also, indirectly, a compendium of faith and practice as well.

It would further help us in the right and hearty use of the Lord's Prayer, if each one would endeavour to make for himself a short paraphrase of it from time to time, a paraphrase which would be altered and improved as he made progress in the spiritual life.

As a slight illustration of what is meant, it might be paraphrased with a special reference to the Confession and Absolution which precede it, as it is first used in the Daily Service, thus :—

‘ Our Father, who art in heaven, from everlasting to everlasting, too pure to behold iniquity, but All-Merciful to us in Jesus Christ our Lord, may Thy Name—Thy Holy Being and Attributes, so far as Thou hast vouchsafed to reveal them to us—be hallowed by us, as we sorrow over our sins against Thee, All-Holy, and fear Thy just indignation, and yet trust in Thine infinite mercy and love. And so may Thy kingdom come in all our hearts, as we resolve to be, by Thy grace, Thy faithful subjects in the time to come. And may Thy Will be done by us, more and more completely and joyfully henceforth, in action and endurance, as it is done by Thy holy angels,

and as it was done, above all, in the pattern life of our Blessed Lord.

' And in order to this, do Thou give us day by day all that which may be necessary to sustain us in life and to maintain the physical and social machinery of the world, that our time of probation be not too quickly brought to an end; and above all, give us spiritual food in the grace of the Holy Spirit, that we may live and grow in the spiritual life, without which the maintenance of our natural life is of little account. Do Thou also forgive us all our past sins, which we have now confessed, and for which we have sought Thy pardon, according to Thy gracious promise declared in the Absolution which has just been pronounced, that they may not stand against us, and remove Thy favour from us now, and involve us in the terrible condemnation of the wicked at the last great day. And for the future, do Thou keep us from being overcome by temptation in our weakness, so far as it may be, and deliver us from the dangers arising from evil spirits, and an evil world around, and our own evil hearts within. And this we ask, remembering that Thine is the kingdom, Thou art our King, and we are subjects of Thee alone: Thine is the Power, Thou canst dispose as Thou wilt all outward things and the wills of men; Thine is the Glory, to advance which should be our great motive in life, as to adore and glorify Thee will be our joy in heaven for ever.'

By thus meditating upon it, and paraphrasing it, either in a general way or with reference to some particular point of view, the meaning of the Lord's Prayer will be entered into more fully by us. And thus we shall offer it up to God at once with a more fervent spirit, and with a more intelligent mind, remembering that we are not only addressing God, but that we are addressing Him in the very words, as well as through the mediation, of His own eternal Son.

PART II.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SENTENCES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SERVICE OF PRAISE.

THE first part of the Service,—that which may be called from its prevailing tone ‘the Service of Confession,’—being ended, the second part, which may be called in a similar way ‘the Service of Praise,’ begins. And as the former portion was composed of various parts, so this also consists of Canticles, Psalms, reading of Holy Scripture, and a Creed, combined.

And further it will be observed, that here, as before, there is a preparation provided by the Church. She wisely abstains from entering suddenly, and in an unprepared way, on any part of the worship of God. And as the Service of Confession was ushered in by some preliminary Sentences designed to attune the mind to the work of the penitent acknowledgment of sin, so she opens the Service of Praise with some Versicles and their Responds, in order that, before launching on the ful tide of psalmody, the mind may be prepared for this its high work.

The first four Sentences, consisting of two Versicles with their Responds, have been in use from ancient times, ‘certainly,’ (Mr. Procter writes)¹ ‘since the sixth century’ in the Church.

¹ Page 212. ‘These Versicles are mentioned in the rule of St. Benedict, who died in A.D. 543, as the prefatory part of the Service. . . . They are the “Sursum corda” of the Daily Service, and yet have a tone

'First, there is the Versicle, "O Lord, open thou our lips," with its answer, "And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise," taken from the 15th verse of the 1st Psalm, and declaring our inability, unless He Himself gives us the power, to praise God as we ought. We think that we can now at once lift up our hearts in praise. But we need God's help. We cannot at once mount up on the joyful wings of praise, and join the triumphant songs of the "whole Church in heaven and earth." Therefore we say, "O Lord, open Thou our lips." And we respond, "Our mouth shall show forth Thy praise." *Our,—Mouth*; for *all*, *aloud*, as members of a united company, should show forth the praise of God.'¹

Then follows the Versicle, 'O God, make speed to save us,' with its Respond, 'O Lord, make haste to help us,' taken from the opening verse of the 1xxth Psalm, sentences which join on in close connection with the foregoing. For they set forth God in those two great attributes in which He is to be regarded and adored by man, viz., as the Giver of *pardon* and of *strength*, the Saviour of man from the guilt and penalty of sin, and the Author of help and strength to resist it. And in these Sentences the spirit is lifted up to God in devout aspiration that He will now at once, without delay, grant to us His forgiveness and grace that we may pour forth our praises to Him with a sense of peace, as trusting to His mercy for pardon, and with a sense of humble confidence in our purposes and resolves for the future, as resting on Divine support from Him.

It will be seen, thus, that these Versicles and Responds hold very fittingly an intermediate place between the Penitential Service which has preceded, and the Service of Praise which

of humility, and even penitence, given to them by their derivation from the 1st and 1xxth Psalms.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

¹ From Tuttiett.

is about to be offered to God, in whose special presence we stand in His House of Prayer. For sin, of which each one has just confessed that he is guilty, clouds the mind, so that it cannot by faith see God ; it impairs the Divine image in the soul, so that, not being like Him, we cannot see Him as He is ; it drags down the affections, so that they cannot soar up to and adore Him.¹ And thus it practically closes the lips so that they cannot worthily praise God.² And therefore we need

¹ 'The Bible and the Church look upon sin as the contradiction of the Divine nature ; as a separation from a Being of perfect love, who has formed us in His image, as the determination to have another image than His.'—Maurice, 'on the Prayer Book,' p. 268.

'He made it appear to them that the whole service of the Church was a reasonable, and therefore an acceptable, sacrifice to God : as namely, that we begin with confession of ourselves to be vile " miserable sinners ;" and that we begin so because, till we have confessed ourselves to be such, we are not capable of that mercy which we acknowledge we need and pray for ; but having, in the Prayer of our Lord, begged pardon for those sins which we have confessed ; and hoping that, as the priest hath declared our absolution, so by our public confession and real repentance we have obtained that pardon ; then we dare and do proceed to beg of the Lord to "open our lips, that our mouth may show forth His praise ;" for till then we are neither able nor worthy to praise Him. But this being supposed, we are then fit to say " Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and fit to proceed to a further service of our God in the Collects, and Psalms, and Lauds that follow in the Service.'—Life of George Herbert, affixed to his 'Remains.'

² 'The responses here enjoined consist of prayers and praises. The first, " O Lord, open Thou our lips." " And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise," are very frequent in ancient liturgies, particularly in those of St. James and St. Chrysostom, and are fitly placed here with respect to those sins we lately confessed ; for they are part of David's penitential Psalm, who looked on his guilt so long, till the grief, shame, and fear which followed thereupon had almost sealed up his lips, and made him speechless ; so that he could not praise God as he desired, unless it pleased Him, by speaking peace to his soul, to remove those terrors ; and then his lips would be opened, and his mouth ready to praise God. And if we were as sensible of our guilt as we ought to be, it will be needful for us to beg such evidences of our pardon as may free us from the terrors which seal up our lips, and then we shall be fit to praise God heartily in the following Psalms.'—Wheatley, p. 124.

that God should give us pardon and strength, that so, with peace of mind in respect to our past defeats, and hope of victory for the future in His strength, we may be able to raise up our thoughts and affections to God in the Spirit, and with joyful lips to praise Him in His wisdom, His power, and His love.¹

It is not then till we have thus, priest and people together, addressed the Lord in these sentences of humble aspiration and prayer that we venture to stand up, as in the attitude of praise,² and give glory to God in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity in the *Gloria*,³ 'the Christian's hymn and shorter creed,' to use Bishop Sparrow's words. The first part of it is an expansion of the Song of the Seraphim, given in the book of the prophet Isaiah. And this is followed by a Respond

¹ 'Then the priest says: "Lord, open Thou our lips," not as if he were separate from the congregation. His glory is to be one with them; to represent their fellowship; to feel their weakness; to receive the strength which ever flows forth for him and them. The congregation answer, "And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise." With one heart and one mouth we will praise Thee, when Thou hast opened our lips; not as a set of separate atoms, but as a real living organic body, possessed with one spirit, inspired with one language. Next goes out of the lips of the priest a cry which expresses the secret sense of helplessness to pray, to think, to speak, to act, in thousands of human spirits—"O God, make speed to save us;" and the congregation echoes that cry, "O Lord, make haste to help us."—Maurice, 'on the Prayer Book,' p. 61.

² 'Furthermore, because of the infirmity of human nature, and lest men should, from the strain on their earnest attention, find a weariness in the most blessed service of their God, the interruptions, or breaks, are made so as to become so many changes in the posture and attitude as well of the mind as of the body, so that at one time kneeling in humble confession or earnest prayer, at another time standing to declare aloud our praise or our assent to revealed truths, at another time sitting to listen to the Word of God, we are relieved, if we choose, of any just cause for listlessness, while yet there is sufficient time allowed for the gravity and solemnity of a public service.'—De Teissier, 'Introduction,' p. ix.

³ 'The beautiful dogmatic Anthem, "Gloria Patri," is of primitive origin, and is naturally traceable to the angelic hymns in Isaiah vi. 3,

declaring our belief in the eternal existence of that Ever-Blessed Trinity, whom we thus, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit granted to us in these latter days of the Christian dispensation, are permitted to worship and adore.

And these same words (it may be noticed in passing here), are repeated at the close of each Psalm and Canticle (except the *Te Deum*, which is so simply an expansion of the *Gloria* throughout, as to make the use of it unnecessary), 'to signify our belief,' to use Mr. Procter's words, 'that the same God was worshipped by the Jewish Church as by us, only that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is more clearly revealed to us;' and, in this way, to 'turn the Jewish Psalms into Christian hymns.'¹

And then this prelude, so to call it, concludes with the Versicle² 'Praise ye the Lord' (which is taken from the and St. Luke ii. 13, the Trinitarian form of it being equally traceable to that of the baptismal formula ordained by our Lord in St. Matth. xxviii. 19. Clement of Alexandria, who wrote before the end of the second century, refers to the use of this hymn; and a hymn is printed by Dr. Routh in which there is an evident trace of the same custom. It is also referred to even earlier by Justin Martyr. The use of the hymn in this place is recognised by the rule of St. Benedict. And it is found so placed in the earliest English Services, those which are usually called Anglo-Saxon. It also occurs in the same position in the daily offices of the Eastern and Romish Churches at the present day. So that the Church throughout the world opens its lips day by day with the same words of faith in the Blessed Trinity, and of devout praise to each Person.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

¹ Page 215. 'The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity may appropriately be called the full blossom of gospel revelation. This is the culminating mystery of our faith, into the acknowledgment of which we are, by the Lord's commandment, baptized. And therefore, by reciting a Canticle involving this doctrine at the end of each Psalm, we show that we mentally turn the Psalm into a Christian hymn, and are singing it in its Christian significance.'—Dr. Goulburn, 'Communion Office,' Part i. lect. ii.

² 'The addition of the succeeding Versicle and Response gives to this unity of praise on earth a further likeness to the unity of praise which was revealed to St. John, Revelation xix. 5, 6.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

Sarum Breviary, and is simply the word Hallelujah in English form), as an exhortation on the part of the minister to the people, inviting and exhorting them to enter heartily into the Service of Praise. And the Versicle has, as its corresponding Respond, 'The Lord's Name be praised,' wherein the people take up the words of the minister, and declare their readiness to enter on the work of praise.¹

Very fitting, if not absolutely necessary, is this solemn introduction to the work of praise. For praise, as it is the highest, so is it also the most difficult part of the worship of God. It is the *highest*, for in it the worshipper looks away from his own errors, needs, mercies, and those of others. It is God who now is before his view, God in all His glorious attributes, as He manifests Himself in His works of nature, and as He has revealed Himself in His Word, setting forth His infinite love in the creation of our world, in man's redemption, and in the bestowal of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, shed abroad for the renewal of the fallen nature of mankind.² But it is the *most difficult* too. For it is easy,

¹ 'The answer, "*The Lord's Name be praised*," was first inserted in the Prayer Book for Scotland (1637), and was placed in the English Book at the last Revision in 1661.'—*Procter*, p. 213.

² 'In the East and West alike, therefore, and in our own existing offices, the key-note is correctly pitched for the whole of the ordinary Service of the day, by means (1) of the Invitatory and the xcvth Psalm; (2) of the single preliminary "Glory be," &c. By these we are admonished that the idea of praise claims to subordinate and appropriate, in a manner, any other element and conception belonging to our service, whether confession, hearing, prayer, or whatsoever it may be. It is the very triumph of grace over nature; it is the higher element, fusing by its native fervour, and assimilating to its own more ethereal essence, the lower and more human accidents of our being.'

'Now this is a very elevated and ennobling view to take of our Services. Thoroughly to realise it is to take up the standing-ground nearest to heaven on earth that men can habitually attain. Of angelic service we know but two things: the heavenly ritual is revealed to us as having for its substance praise, and for its manner, joint action and

comparatively, to think of our own human transgressions of God's law, of our manifold temporal and spiritual necessities, of the mercies which have been shown in sparing us, the blessings which have engoldened our earthly life. It is hard to draw away our minds from earthly things, and fix them in rapt meditation on the eternal but unseen realities of the spiritual world, and have the eye of the spirit fixed, as it were, on God. Yet this is required for the right performance of the work of praise. Looking forth on the things of outward nature, with all their wonders, as a mirror in which the Beneficence, the Wisdom, and the Power of God are displayed, or reflecting on the history of individuals, of nations, of mankind at large, as the theatre in which God's most mighty works of wisdom and love have been carried out, the spirit of man is lifted up at length to the praise of the glorious Being whom it thus gazes on and adores, and catches somewhat of the feeling of the inspired Psalmist when he wrote :

All Thy works praise Thee, O God ;
And Thy saints give thanks unto Thee.
They show the glory of Thy kingdom,
And talk of Thy power.

And we know how hard it is thus to rise above earth, and lift up our hearts to God in heaven, and by faith behold Him, attended by the myriad hosts who do His pleasure, in His eternal glory, as He is. Really to enter thus into the spirit of praise, requires essentially a spiritual mind : a mind,

mutual exhortation : "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power;" and again, "Hallelujah;" and again they said "Hallelujah." And when the spirit of collective and mutually sustained praise so enters into *our* service towards God as to fuse and harmonise all, even to its lesser elements, into one homogeneous action of this kind, we seem most nearly to ascend to the height of that condition in which intuition will have superseded knowledge and fruition prayer'.—*Freeman*, i. 285.

that is, lifted up by the secret but most mighty power of the Holy Spirit to the knowledge and love of God. And, reversely, the act of praising God carries up the soul into a higher sphere, and transfigures it into more of likeness to Him on whom it gazes in the Spirit, as it sings His praise, and to whom it must indeed be made like, if it is to see Him as He is for ever.

Verily, as we think of these things, we feel the value of the Sentences with which our Church directs us to prepare our hearts for the Service of Praise. We feel that we cannot, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, render to God our Praise as we ought. And we echo the words of the Psalmist,

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord;
And my mouth shall show Thy praise,

which is as if we should say, 'Thou, O Lord, must put away our past sin with its deadening influence on the soul. Thou must give us hope and strength for the future. Thou must raise up our thoughts and affections unto Thee. So shall we, by the help of Thy Holy Spirit, praise Thee more nearly as we ought, and as we hope hereafter to praise Thee when we stand in Thy presence and behold Thy glory in heaven.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE PSALMS.

THE Sentences having been offered which follow the Lord's Prayer and form the transition to the second part of the Service, the worshippers are now fairly launched on the work of praise. And in this part of Divine worship the Psalms naturally occupy the leading place. For they are so adapted and designed for this purpose, that they were styled the 'Book of Praises' by the Jews.¹ And therefore they may well be considered first, although it is with a Canticle, the *Venite*, following the Sentences, that the Service of Praise begins.

To consider the Book of Psalms at all fully within the limits of a single chapter would be impossible. A treatise which should be devoted to the explanation of the book in an accurate and at the same time simple and generally intelligible way, is still a desideratum in our Biblical literature. All that can be attempted here is to touch on some few points, *first*, as to the manner in which the Psalms are used by us in our Service: and *secondly*, as to the nature and composition of the Psalms themselves.

To consider, first, the manner in which the Psalms are used by us. It will be observed that the Psalms are to be offered by the people *standing*, to stand being to place ourselves in the attitude of praise, as expressing the elevation or lifting up of our hearts to God. Then, according to the rubric for

¹ *Comber*, i. 171.

the Evening Service, they are to be *said or sung*;¹ which plan shall be adopted being left to the discretion of the minister, according as he shall see to be most suitable for the particular congregation with which he has to deal. Where the people generally are sufficiently trained for it, it seems most fitting that the Psalms should be sung, as expressing our praise to God.² Further, it has become customary to sing or say the Psalms antiphonally or by alternation, in such way that the minister should say one verse, and the people the following verse in the way of response; or else that one half of the people should say one verse, and the next be said by the other half correspondently.³ It appears that this is according to the custom not only of the Early Christian, but even of the Jewish Church. And it has this special advantage, that by it the attention of all is kept from flagging, and all are led to bear their part in the high Service of Praise.⁴ And, as one

¹ 'Then shall be said or sung the Psalms in order as they are appointed.' (Rubric following the Sentences after the Lord's Prayer at the Evening Service.)

² There is a famous passage in Hooker on singing the Psalms, and on the manner in which they should be sung, 'Eccl. Pol.', v. 38, 3.

³ 'The following is St. Basil's account of the method of singing some of the Psalms in his time, and the advantages of it: "Dividing themselves into two choirs, they sing alternately, securing hereby at once due meditation on the Divine Oracles," viz. by listening in turns silently: "and also providing against distraction of their own thoughts," by having a part to perform themselves.'—Freeman, vol. i. p. 93. See Hooker, 'Eccl. Pol.', v. 39, 2.

⁴ 'It was a very ancient practice of the Jews to recite their public Hymns and Prayers by course: and many of the Fathers assure us that the Primitive Christians imitated them therein: so that there is no old Liturgy wherein there are not such short and devout sentences as these, which, from the people's answering the priests, are called *responses*. The design of them is, by a grateful variety, to quicken the people's devotions, and engage their attention: for since they have their share of duty, they must expect till their turn come, and prepare for the next response; whereas, when the minister does all, the people naturally grow sleepy and heedless, as if they were wholly unconcerned.'—Wheatly, p. 123.

remaining point, it is to be observed that the *Version* used in the Prayer Book for the Psalter is taken from the old translation of the Bible, that of Tyndale and Coverdale, made in 1535 and revised by Cranmer in 1539. The other portions of Holy Scripture in the Prayer Book were drawn from the last translation of the Bible, in the revision of 1661. But the old Psalter was not altered. The choirs were accustomed to it. The people, of whom many were unable to read, were familiar with it. And its language was considered to be 'more smooth and fit for song.'¹

These remarks may be enough as to our method of using the Psalms in the Service of the Church. They are so arranged that all may be used once in the course of the Daily Service of each month. And again, all, or almost all, will be introduced into the Services of the Sunday during the course of the year. In this respect a change was made at the Reformation, from the then prevailing custom of having fixed Psalms for each Service during the week.² And even now for certain special days there are fixed Psalms appointed still. In this way the advantage which the old method had is retained: while our present method has the great excellence that it brings all the Psalms before the mind each month, and that in a constantly new combination with Scripture, the Lessons which accompany the Psalms varying with the month in which they are used. It now remains that we consider the Psalms themselves.

Over and above the difficulties which are very generally felt as to the meaning of the Psalms in detail, there is the more general difficulty as to the spirit in which the Psalms are to be used by us. Why should we sing, we think, specially of the difficulties and trials of the Israelites, and of their deliver-

¹ *Procter*, p. 215.

² See *Freeman*, i. 334.

ance through the mercies of God ? How can we make our own words uttered by David, and by others before and after him, in far distant times ? Is there not much in the Psalms as, e.g., the stern denunciation of enemies, which does not accord with the spirit of the Christian dispensation under which we live ?

These are some of the difficulties which arise in the minds of many as to the use of the Psalms in the Service of the Church. And yet the employment of them by the Church collectively, not only in Jewish but in Christian times, and the blessing which we find in the use of them, individually, all of us, alike in times of trial and sorrow and despair, and in times of thankfulness and joy, show conclusively that they have that in them which fits them for our use, and warrants our branch of the Christian Church in directing us to make them an important—it may almost be said a main—element of our daily worship of God in His House of Prayer.

It may be well therefore to consider some few leading points as to the principles on which the Psalms may be employed by us, and made to harmonise with the general spirit of the Christian dispensation, the light as well as the privilege of which it is our blessing to be permitted to share.

And *first*, it is to be observed that the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of David, gave his words, in many cases, by the particular form in which He led the Psalmist to frame them, a meaning beyond what the Psalmist himself had immediately in view, and an application to our Blessed Lord ; the Psalmist himself in some cases, it would seem, being permitted to see, as in a vision, a future Great One, of whom he was being raised to speak, and of whom he was in some respects the representative.¹ It is hardly necessary to refer to the many

¹ There is a striking passage on this subject in Canon Liddon's 'Some Words for God,' p. 291.

places in which Holy Scripture speaks of David as writing 'in Spirit' or 'in the Spirit,' or of that special passage in which he is expressly declared to have foreshown the Resurrection of our Lord.¹ Now all those Psalms respecting which we have the warrant of Holy Scripture for doing so, we *ought* unquestionably to use in a Christian sense; and others we may *allow* to have probably a Christian meaning, where they seem without any forced interpretation to apply to Christ.²

Then, *secondly*, where they exhibit the personal experience of David himself, they may be used by us, in so far as our own experience coincides with his. As it has been said of the Holy Land, in which the chosen people of Israel dwelt, that it combined in a wonderful degree all varieties of climate, and soil, and form, and vegetation, in a way which fitted it to supply imagery suited to all nations of the world, so the experience of the great representatives of the race of Israel, and of David above all others, seems to have been overruled by God to combine the greatest variety of spiritual and temporal condition. In joy and in sorrow; in trials and doubts; in shame and repentance; in gratitude and delight at the recovery of God's favour; in all these and the other events of life, we have David as our forerunner, and his Psalms express our own thoughts and feelings in expressing his. And hence, while other writers of Holy Scripture teach us what we should think or feel or do, the Psalms of David (as St.

¹ Acts ii. 25-32.

² See on this subject, Hammond, 'Introduction to the Psalms.' 'A large proportion of the Psalms have visible and determinate Christian associations' (Mr. Freeman writes) 'in virtue of references made to them by our Lord Himself or by His Apostles. Others are associated by traditional usage, which has descended to our own Church, with doctrinal or other conceptions. From these two causes, there are about fifty Psalms which, in the mind of any person fairly acquainted with Scripture, and trained in the ways of the Church, wear a distinct Christian aspect, and will without any effort be used as such; and the number may easily be added to.' (i. p. 333.)

Augustine has observed), not only do this, but they also supply us with the words in which our thoughts and feelings and resolutions should be expressed. And, to go one step further, as our Blessed Lord, in His perfect humanity, was in all respects as we are (sin only except), and experienced the same griefs, and trials, and pains, and joys as we do, we may look on from the experience of David which reflects our own in such a way that we can speak of ours in his words, to that higher experience of the Son of Man which the experience of David more or less reflects as well. And thus, by considering how He thought of God the Father and addressed Him, how He bare shame and reproach and pain, how He met temptation, how He shared human joy, how He mourned over sin, though it was not his own, but that of the fallen race whose nature he had deigned to assume, we may elevate at times even King David's thoughts at the same time that we raise and direct ourselves. If, for instance, passages meet us conveying severe denunciation by David of his enemies, uttered in deep bitterness of soul even by him who in many cases showed unexampled meekness under provocation, and 'committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously,' like our Lord Himself, we may, even as we utter these words, rise up from them to a higher view. We may, indeed, give them a spiritual application to the enemies of the soul, its sins and its tempters, and conveying man's abhorrence of sin which works the ruin of mankind. Or we may regard them as expressing the desire for the restoration of the sinner through the punishment of his sins. Or we may consider them as declaring man's righteous resentment against evil, and reflecting the just indignation of an All-Holy God.¹ We may do this. But we should also, so far as there are traces of personal anger in the Psalms, think of Him who has taught us in the new dispensa-

¹ See the excellent remarks of Dr. Kay on the Psalms, Appendix iv.

tion to 'love our enemies,' and who set us a perfect example by giving Himself to die for us when we were in rebellion against Him, and prayed for the forgiveness of those who were putting Him to death. And in this way we shall be led to think with gratitude of the higher dispensation under which our lot is cast, and rise to the spirit of Christian love.

And *thirdly*, in so far as many of the Psalms are *national* rather than personal, setting forth the history of the Jewish people, they may be used as representing the history of the Christian Church, and the course of the Christian life in the Church, and (to a certain extent) the life of our Divine Lord so far as His life on earth as man was shadowed forth by the vicissitudes of the Jewish race.¹ We can hardly fail to notice how the national history of the Jews was so ordered as to set forth in a figure the spiritual life of man. Thus, for instance, in the history of the Israelite deliverance from Egypt and their journeyings towards Canaan, and their contests with the Canaanite tribes, we have an image of man's passage out of the bondage of sin and the world, through the difficulties of life which remain even in the Christian dispensation—the Christian's 'Land of Promise,' as it might be called—as he journeys spiritually on his pilgrim course towards his final rest in the 'inheritance of the saints in light.'

Thus the Psalms should be used with this threefold reference in view: (1) as speaking by prophetic anticipation of Christ in some cases, and, in other cases, referring indirectly to Him under the figure of the Jews: (2) as representing, in the experience of the Psalmist, the circumstances of life common to us all as men: (3) as setting forth, under

¹ 'We may admit—for the New Testament writers justify us in the admission—that in some real sense the nation and its Messiah are one. "Out of Egypt have I called My Son," is true alike of Israel and of Jesus. We need not question that much which belongs to the one belongs to the Other also.'—*J. J. S. Perowne*.

the figure of the Israelite history, the course of the Christian Church,—that is, of the whole body of Christians collectively, and of each individual Christian in his separate spiritual life,—with its failures and triumphs, its aids and difficulties, its trials and hopes, as directed by the superintending care of God above, all exhibited under the figure of the chequered history of the Jewish race. If that history culminated in the rejection, by the mass of the Jews, when He came visibly among them, of Him who had been all along striving to draw them to Him, and their loss of the exceeding great glory and joy granted to those who accept Him faithfully, and see in Him their spiritual and unearthly but most real King, we may learn in all this, as we sing the Psalms which relate to it, special lessons for ourselves.

So using the Psalms, we shall find them full of instruction and comfort and warning to ourselves. So using them, we shall find them full of meaning, ever fresh, adapting themselves to and expressing all the varying phases of our temporal and spiritual life. Above all, they will be the noblest instrument of worship and praise, raising up the soul on the wings of holy thought and feeling to the Lord; they will carry on from week to week and day to day the echo of our great Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, when we commemorate the death of our Blessed Lord for us:¹ and they will unite us into closest union with Him; for they will make us, His members, blend ourselves, as it were, with Him, while we

¹ 'It only remains to speak of the Psalms under their highest aspect. The Psalms, then, from the Eucharistic point of view, are the carrying on of that great act of Thanksgiving, Praise, and Oblation, by obedient dedication of the entire being to the glory of God, which is supremely and most effectually performed in the Eucharist. By means of them the tones of the Tersanctus, the Gloria in Excelsis, and similar features of the Communion Office, are prolonged, and re-echo through the Sunday and the week; a continued presentation of "ourselves, a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice." —*Freeman*, i. 337.

are led by the Psalmist in the Spirit to sing of His sufferings and death and resurrection and ascension to glory, as though they were—that which in Him we trust they yet in their measure may be—our own.

How high and glorious is the theme on which we have dwelt now—the Praise of God ; of God the Father, in Christ, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and in words uttered under inspiration from Him. It is, as was said before, the noblest work—the highest form even of the worship—of man on earth, it is ‘the antepast of eternity.’ For one great part of our work through the endless ages of the eternal life in glory shall be, we believe, to join the angels and archangels in adoring and praising God. Let not our thoughts be but a lofty sentiment, a passing vision of spiritual glory, fading in a moment before the glare of the world’s pomp. And that it may be more, that it may take root unto eternal life, it may be well to keep these two practical rules which, God helping you, shall enable you to maintain through life your Hymn of Praise.

First, then, study and use the Book of Psalms more. Think over them, with prayer and meditation, and such helps to their interpretation as you can obtain. Keep a few especially in mind, and carry them with you in thought day by day, till their meaning grows familiar to you. We may not all be able to say thoughtfully, each day, the Psalms appointed for the day. But we may all keep a few of the Psalms before us every day ; choosing, e.g., for the morning one which speaks of man’s creation, or preservation, or resurrection, or the dedication of his life to God ;¹ one which speaks of his dangers and trials for mid-day ;² and one for nightfall which expresses acknowledgment of our faults, or refers to the evening of the

¹ e.g. Psalms iii., v., xix.

² e.g. Psalms xv., xxiii., xxxi.

natural day, or to the evening of the day of life : or sets forth death and man's future glory in the world to come.¹ And on these, or some verses of them, we may ponder at the several seasons of the day, and lift up our hearts through them to the praise and adoration of God.

But remember, secondly, and above all, that, if we are to offer the Psalms with meaning, our hearts must be attuned to the praise of God. Thus the Psalms may be to us a test of our spiritual state, as well as an expression of it. Do we offer the Psalms heartily ? If not, is it not because our hearts are cold, our thoughts worldly, our spirits earthbound ? If our hearts are in this state, we cannot offer the Psalms rightly ; we cannot enter into their spirit ; we cannot praise God with the heart as well as with the lips in them. How can we speak in the person of Christ, if we are no true members of Him, have no real thought and love of Him, are in no way transformed into likeness to Him ? Then, again, how can we speak of the troubles of life as the Psalmist did, if we cannot look at them in his view ? Must it not be hypocrisy to speak, with the Psalmist, of sorrowing over sin before God, as an offence against Him, if we think of it at most only as bringing shame and loss upon ourselves ? How can we sing of our thirst for holiness, and for the vision of God, if we have no desire to be pure as He is pure, if heaven and its glories have no attraction for our hearts ? How can we utter from the heart those words *Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits*, if we never think of all our mercies as the result of His good Providence, of our blessings as poured down by Him ? How can we sing *All Thy works praise Thee, O God* (Ps. cxlv.), making ourselves the mouthpiece of Creation, if we never think of God's wisdom and power and glory, as manifested in the wondrous glory of the works of His hand ? Or,

¹ Psalms iv., vi., xvi., lxiii.

once more, can we enter truly into the national history of the Jews, and its application to our spiritual history, if Christ our Lord is striving to win us to Himself, with unseen power indeed, but with as real power as that wherewith he strove to win the Jews, nay, with far greater power, by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and all in vain; if, were He now to draw near again, visibly, to our earth, borne on the clouds of glory, at His second coming, we should be found to have rejected Him all along, whatever we might have professed, and should be rejected by Him for ever. Let us think solemnly of these things, now, in this our day. Let us test our true condition by the Psalms which God has given us wherein to praise Him. Do we offer them, let us ask ourselves, sincerely now? Could we offer them in heaven for ever?

So let us study the Book of Psalms more carefully, and use it more regularly, and then strive and pray that we may be enabled to offer the Psalms more and more sincerely and fervently, by rising up ever more and more to their standard, and weaving them continually more and more into our being, and making the spirit which they breathe the spirit of our life in the world, that our hymn of praise, begun on earth, may sound on through the ages of our eternal life in heaven.

CHAPTER X.

THE CANTICLES.

COMBINED with the Psalms and Lessons, which, with the Creed, make up the second part of the Daily Service, are three Canticles, i.e., three hymns of praise to God, or (as they have been defined), three 'songs of thanksgiving for some great benefit.'¹

It was a custom in the quite early times of the Church thus to intermingle hymns with lessons from Holy Scripture.² For the praise of God inflames the affections, and leads up to a more earnest attention to the revelation which He vouchsafes of Himself. And these revelations of Him again, such as are read in the Lessons, supply us with fresh themes of praise.

Accordingly, it is ordered by our Church that Psalms (with or without an invitatory Canticle), shall precede, and a Canticle follow, the Lessons from the Old and New Testament Scriptures; and again, that a Canticle shall be introduced between the two Lessons.

¹ Freeman, i. 350. A 'Canticle' is strictly a *short* song. And so the word is applied to a *single* Psalm, taken from the body of the Psalms, and used separately; as well as to any other short song of praise. A *hymn*, again, as distinguished from a Canticle and a Psalm, is the name given commonly to a *metrical* song of praise, as distinguished from one not in verse.

² 'The use of responsory hymns after the lessons is very ancient. The Council of Laodicea (A.D. 367) ordered, in its Seventeenth Canon, that Psalms and Lessons should be used alternately.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

The Canticles (like the Psalms, according to the use of some churches,) are *sung* rather than said; melody being at once the fittest vehicle for these high and holy expressions of adoration and praise, and also itself lifting up the spirit and aiding it in its glorious work. Also in singing them, a somewhat longer time is devoted to them, and a fuller opportunity is thus afforded of dwelling on the thoughts which they convey. And they are sung *standing*, that being felt to be (as was said before), the fittest attitude for praise.

According to the original arrangement, there were only three Canticles for morning, and two for evening use. The Canticle beginning 'O all ye Works of the Lord,' (or *Benedicite*, as it is commonly called,) was only appointed to take the place of the *Te Deum* during Lent: not to be interchanged with it at any time at the minister's discretion. Afterwards, in 1552, the rubric directing that the *Benedicite* should be used in Lent only was withdrawn: and the three Psalms, Ps. c., Ps. xcvi., and Ps. lxvii., were added, to be used interchangeably with the Canticles to which they were respectively attached when the passages of Scripture from which those Canticles are taken occur in the Service of the day.

It would occupy us too long if we were to attempt to dwell on the several Canticles in detail. It will be enough to make such few remarks upon each as may suggest some leading thoughts respecting them, and enable all to enter into the meaning of them more.

The *Venite*, or xcvith Psalm, is specially suited for the place which it holds as inviting to 'come before God' i.e., (as the words strictly mean), in order to offer to Him our praise and thanksgiving as the sacrifice which we bring, and urging to offer it without delay. Its name, like those of the other Canticles, is taken from the opening words in the Latin form, *Venite*, i.e., 'O come ye and let us sing,' &c. It is pecu-

liarly fitted (as it has been observed), as an outburst of gratitude after the assurance of God's pardon to the truly penitent in the absolution which has gone before.¹ The first seven verses, it will be seen, invite to the praise of God under different aspects: as He is our Saviour (vv. 1, 2), our supreme Lord (vv. 3, 4), the Creator of ourselves and all the world, (vv. 5, 6), our Shepherd, the constant Guardian, who watches over with especial care His chosen people as a collected flock (v. 7). And then the remainder is occupied with an earnest exhortation not to delay, but to listen *at once* to that voice of His holy Word whereby He urges us to realise our true position and make it our own, praising and worshipping and obeying God: lest our hearts become hardened through the power of indifference and sin, and we only wake up to a sense of our duty when it is too late, even if we ever really wake up to it at all.

And with a view to this, it reminds us, under the figure of the Israelites (whose wanderings through the wilderness into Palestine, and trials there, are so often made a figure of our progress through this world towards our future state),² of the danger we are in of tempting God by neglect, and of being

¹ 'Well may this be said by those who have united truly in the first part of the Service.

' For it well "becometh to be thankful," those who from their hearts have cried for mercy, and deep into their hearts have received God's full assurance of it through Christ Jesus: well may they join in that new song of thanksgiving which God has put into their mouth—the "Invitatory Psalm"—and say one to another, "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation."—*Dickinson*, p. 35.

² Thus verses 8 and 9 refer to Exodus xvii. 7, Deuteronomy ix. 22, and the provocation of God at Massah and Kibroth Hattaavah (cp. Psalm lxxviii. 19). Verses 10 and 11 refer to the punishment of the Israelites, a large part of them being forbidden to enter the promised land.

cut off from our eternal rest.¹ It is difficult to imagine any words more suitable than those of this Canticle for the purpose for which it is introduced here. We are entering on our great Service of Praise. And in conjunction with this, we are to listen to portions from the Old and New Testament Scriptures, in order that we may, at the same time, learn more of God and His will, and thus be incited to more intelligent and earnest praise of Him, as well as to more hearty resolutions of yielding to Him more fully, in the time to come, that obedience without which the praise of our lips is worthless in His sight.

Well, then, it is that He should first be shown to us as He wills to be in His relation to us; and then, that we should be reminded how we may make this our blessed condition in reference to Him our own. And therefore, first, He is set before us as the God of our salvation, in whose hand are the bodies and spirits of men, by Whom our world and all that is therein was created, and is from hour to hour sustained; by Whom we were called into being in a special way, to be in His own image, in peculiar nearness to Himself, and by Whom we are in an especial manner watched over and preserved, as sheep who are under the Good Shepherd's care.

And then, in the second part of the Canticle, we are reminded that now, 'this day,' at once, while it is called 'to-day,' we may and should enter into, and make fully our own, this loving guardian care for us of our great Creator, which

¹ 'The *Venite* itself, as an Invitatory Psalm, it is difficult to estimate too highly. . . It is not merely that, in common with many other Psalms, it invites to the worship of the Great King, but that it goes on to exhibit so perfect a portraiture, in terms of Israelitish history, of the frail and erring, though redeemed and covenanted estate of man. It is this that fits it to be a prelude to the whole psalmody and worship of the day, whatever its character: since it touches with so perfect a felicity the highest and lowest notes of the scale, that there is nothing so jubilant or so penitential as not to be within the compass of it.'—*Freeman*, i. 330.

He has mercifully revealed to us.¹ And for this we must hear and obey His voice, which speaks to us in many ways, and now speaks by the Psalmist, saying, 'Do not let your hearts be hardened,' as they do become day by day harder when, in sin or indifference, we neglect to listen to the commands of God; and warning us, by the example of the Israelites, of the danger which all such neglect and delay inevitably involves.

Thinking of these things, as we join in this Canticle day by day, we should try to realise what God is to us, as He is set forth to us in the earlier part; and then try to enter heartily into the praise of Him, and resolve to yield entire and cheerful obedience to His will, that so now, at once, He may become to us that which He is willing to be to us all, not only our mighty Creator, Sustainer, Redeemer, but also our most loving Guardian, our ever-present, most loving Friend.

This xcvth Psalm has been thought by some to have been designed by David for public service. 'Grotius,' writes Dean Comber, 'thinks it was designed for the Feast of Tabernacles; Calvin and others for the Sabbath day. But St. Paul (Heb. iii. 15), whose authority we follow, thinks it fit for every day; and by his application of it we have sufficient ground to adopt it into the daily Christian worship.'² It has been used from a very remote period in the Daily Service of the Western Church.³ And so we use it daily now. Once only we sub-

¹ This seems to be the meaning of the word 'to-day,' 'To-day may all this be realised, if ye will hear His voice,' that voice which then is heard speaking in the remainder of the Canticle, 'Harden not,' &c., to 'rest.' See Dr. Kay on the Psalm.

² i. 171. See Dr. Kay's notes on the Psalm.

³ Procter, p. 213. It was generally termed the *Invitatory* Psalm. But the *Invitatory* was strictly a Versicle and Respond:

Lo! our King cometh:
Let us go forth to meet Him,

stitute another hymn in its place. And our substitution of that other hymn in its stead once, and once only, 'tends to put a singular degree of honour upon the one day in the year on which we lay the *Venite* aside, the great and supreme festival of Easter.'¹ And as the daily use of this Canticle, so also the omission of it as a Canticle when it occurs in the Psalms for the morning, is according to the custom of the Church in the West.²

The origin of the next Canticle, the *Te Deum*, is quite uncertain. The old legend is that when St. Augustine was being baptized by St. Ambrose at Milan, the two holy men burst forth spontaneously into a hymn of praise, and sang the *Te Deum*, pouring forth line by line alternately.³ But it is supposed to have been really composed by some one in the sung before the *Venite*, and repeated in whole or in part after each of the verses of the *Venite*. *See* Procter, pp. 213 and 181.

'This Psalm has been used from time immemorial as an introduction to the praises of Divine Service, and was probably adopted by the Church from the Services of the Temple. It was, perhaps, such a familiar use of it in both the Jewish and the Christian system of Divine Service, which led to the exposition of it given in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle is showing the connection between the two dispensations, and the way in which all belief and worship centres in our Divine High Priest and perpetual Sacrifice.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

¹ Mr. Freeman (i. 330), remarks that 'It is some compensation for whatever loss we sustain in the generally unvarying character of our Invitatory Psalm, that this tends to put a singular degree of honour upon the one day in the year on which we lay it aside, the great and supreme festival of Easter. It is not that at other times we fail to acknowledge Christ as the Great King, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, but that the one piece of heavenly tidings which we recognise as making Christian praise itself more Christian still, and so claiming to supersede our ordinary Invitatory is that "Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

² *Freeman*, i. 331.

³ 'So it is called "The song of Austin and Ambrose" in the "Goodly Primer in English" (Marshall's), published in the time of Henry VIII., 1535.—Burton's "Three Primers," p. 82.

Gallican Church, as Hilary of Poictiers (355), or Hilary of Arles (440).¹ It was appointed in the use of Sarum to be sung on Sundays and Festivals, at Morning Prayer, except during Advent, and the whole season of Lent.² And though it is not directly drawn from Holy Scripture, it yet truly represents the spirit of Scripture, especially of the viith chapter of the prophet Isaiah, and the ivth and vth chapters of the Revelation of St. John, with which the opening portions should be compared. It falls into three main parts. In the first part we are carried up in the spirit to heaven; we see the Lord sitting on His throne, and hear the angels' voices, Cherubim and Seraphim singing their ceaseless song, 'Holy, holy, holy,' to God in three Persons, the Lord of Hosts, filling with His glory heaven and earth. And as we hear their song in the spirit, we too join the angels, and the saints who have passed away, apostles, prophets, martyrs, and all the Church throughout the world, in singing praise to God in the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Then, in the second part, we dwell more fully on the praise and adoration due to *our Blessed Lord*, Who was born as Man for our sakes, and died to open heaven for us, and has revealed to us God's merciful scheme for our redemption through Himself, in those Holy Scriptures which we are just engaged in reading,³ and

¹ Procter, p. 222. The writer in the 'Annotated Book of Common Prayer' remarks that it seems to be founded on an earlier hymn, traces of which are found in St. Cyprian, and in an old hymn at the end of the Psalter of the Alexandrine MS. of the Scriptures.

² Procter, p. 222.

³ 'Of the intended character of the *Te Deum* as a thanksgiving for the knowledge of God revealed in the Scripture there would seem to be no doubt, from its universal position at the end of the Nocturns or Matins lections. And the guiding thought for the due use both of it and all the other responsive Canticles, is that whatever of Holy Scripture has preceded it (inclusive, be it borne in mind, of the Psalms), is not read for its own sake alone, or even chiefly, nor for the sake of the

now dwells at God's right hand in glory, and shall one day come again to be our Judge. And lastly, in the concluding part, to our praises we add our prayers that He will assist us with His grace, and forgive us our past sins in His mercy, and preserve us from sin in future, and direct us in His high and holy ways, and bless us with His blessing, and keep us from shame and confusion of face, and make us to be numbered with His saints in everlasting glory in the life to come.

The *Benedicite*, or Song of the Three Children, which is allowed to be used interchangeably with the *Te Deum*, is taken from the Apocrypha, and is professedly the hymn of the three companions of Daniel, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, (whose names were changed into Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as Daniel's was into Belteshazzar, in honour, probably, of the heathen god), when they were cast by Nebuchadnezzar into the furnace of fire. But it is really a paraphrase of the cxlviiith Psalm ; and was used as a hymn by the Jews in their Service in later times, and was in common use in the fourth century in the Christian Church.¹ At first, as was said before, it was appointed to be used in Lent only, as being of a less jubilant character than the *Te Deum*. In the Second Book of Edward VI. the rubric was altered, as it appears, for uniformity, when a second Canticle was added in the other cases ; and the *Benedicite* or *Te Deum* were appointed to be particular lessons which it may convey, but as a sample and specimen of the vast whole to which it belongs—a single streak of the “cloudless depth of light” which beams from the great orb of Scripture. It is therefore that this great Canticle is ever in place ; never, with all its depth of meaning and grandeur, speaking a word too much for the thought which the lesson is meant to convey or suggest. Whether what we have heard be some showing forth of God's power, some ray of His wisdom, or some foreshadowing of His promised redemption, it suffices to set the whole before us, and then fully justifies the most exalted and angelic forms of adoration. Though said when the reading of the New Testament is yet to come, it may well be used with anticipative reference to it.—*Freeman*, i. 350.

¹ *Procter*, p. 224.

used at discretion, without being limited to particular seasons.¹ In contrast with the *Te Deum*, which is so full of the highest doctrines as to be almost a creed in itself, the *Benedicite* simply makes man the mouthpiece of Creation, declaring the praise which should go up to the great Creator from all the glorious works of His hands. To declare this is the special prerogative of man, who can alone, in his spiritual nature, offer the spiritual tribute of praise and adoration to God.

And now, to pass on to the Canticles which follow the Second Lesson. While the *Te Deum* points forward rather to the New Testament, commemorating the fulfilment of the work of Christ, and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity therein declared to us, the *Benedictus*, on the other hand, or inspired song of Zacharias at the birth of John the Baptist, refers back to both the Old and New Testament Lessons, commemorating the fulfilment of all the ancient prophecies and promises in the coming of the Lord; and the light of truth, the forgiveness of sin, and the restoration from death to life and immortality, brought by Him at His coming to mankind. It was used, only in a somewhat different position, in the old offices, and has all along been retained in ours. But as it may occasionally occur in the Lessons for the morning, the *Jubilate*, or Ps. c., was added in 1552, to be used instead of the *Benedictus* when that may happen to be read as the chapter for the day, or as the Gospel on St. John the Baptist's day. But now the *Jubilate* has come to be the more frequently used Canticle in the Sunday service, partly perhaps from its more entirely

¹ Procter, p. 225. 'The *Benedicite*, or Song of the Three Children, was in the older offices the Lauds Canticle for Sundays. As a Canticle then, and an honoured one, it was fitly enough at our first Revision appointed, as an alternative for the *Te Deum*, to be used during Lent; at which time, indeed, and perhaps in Advent too, it would seem most fitting to use it, to the laying aside at those times the exalted tone of jubilant adoration which, as we have seen, belongs to the *Te Deum*.—Freeman, i. p. 356.

jubilant character suited to the day. The *Benedictus* has a partially penitential tone. The *Jubilate* is a song of pure praise to God for His creation and providential care of our world. Probably it would be most fitting to use the *Jubilate* especially in the Epiphany period,¹ and the *Benedictus* in Advent and Lent. The *Jubilate* would be more appropriate on Sundays, and the *Benedictus* on week-days, at other times.

Of the evening Canticles, the *Magnificat*, like the *Te Deum* in the morning, looks forward from the Old Testament to the completion of all that for which the old dispensation was preparatory, as recorded in the new, and as summed up in the one great central point of the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord.² And by reason of the close spiritual union with Christ granted to all those who strive to be God's true servants in Him, we may well adopt, as our own, words first uttered by the Mother of our Lord.³ It was used as an evening hymn of praise as long as the service can be traced back in the Western Church.⁴

¹ So Mr. Freeman writes: 'It would seem, as inviting all nations to the praise of God, to harmonise especially with the Epiphany period.' (i. 357).

² The *Magnificat* should be compared with three hymns of the old dispensation, the song of Miriam (Exodus xv. 20), the song of Deborah (Judges v.), and the song of Hannah (1 Samuel ii.) They are songs of *Deliverance*, of *Triumph*, and of *Thanksgiving for God's gift of a son*, respectively. And it will be seen that all these three elements are blended in the hymn of the Virgin Mary, and may all fitly be the subjects of song with us. The three hymns of the Old Testament have been compared to 'the tuning of instruments long before, the sound of harpers indistinctly trying their chords and bringing them in unison for some great symphony, until another Miriam appears in the fulness of time, taking the lead for all ages in the great Eucharistic hymn.'—Is. Williams, quoted by Baird, p. 85.

³ See St. Matth., xii. 50; St. Luke xi. 28; and compare St. Luke xviii. 14, with verses 7 and 8 of the *Magnificat*.

⁴ Procter, p. 244. 'Though the East did not employ the *Magnificat*, but the hymn of the "Joyful Light" instead—a composed Canticle, like the *Te Deum*.'—Freeman, i. 358.

The xcviiith Psalm, or *Cantate*, was chosen to be used interchangeably with the *Magnificat*, possibly because there are many points of connection between the two Canticles, over and above the general fitness of it as a hymn of praise to God, especially when treated in spirit as a 'new song,' wherein we praise God for His mercies in Christ newly revealed to us in these later times.

For the last Canticle in the evening is appointed the *Nunc Dimittis*, or song of Simeon on beholding the Saviour at the Temple. It speaks of the peace with which we can pass into the darkness of the night, and even into the darkness of death, of which night is a type, as being safe under the guardian care of Him whom the Scriptures which have just been read declare to have come to earth to offer salvation to Gentile and Jew alike, and shed the glorious light of His gospel of salvation and immortality upon all. This Song of Simeon, like the *Magnificat*, was sung at Evening Prayer from very early times.

The LXVIth Psalm, which was adopted from the old office as an alternative to the *Nunc Dimittis*, comes in fitly after the Lesson, whether from the Gospels or Apostolical Epistles, as desiring that the knowledge of God's truth which is set forth in the Gospels, and whose spread among the Gentiles is declared in the Epistles, may spread more and more, waking up the voice of praise to God among men, and so leading to that fulness of blessing which He vouchsafes to those who know and honour Him.¹

It must be observed here, before the subject is concluded, that the five great leading Canticles, as they may be considered,

¹ Mr. Procter observes that 'In 1549, the Service at this point followed the Breviary, putting prayers and collects after the Song of Simeon. At the Revision in 1552, the Apostle's Creed was placed here; as in the corresponding part of the Morning Service.' (p. 245.)

lead up the spirit, one by one, higher and higher, and enable it to penetrate more and more into the deep things of God. Thus the *Venite* sets before our view God the Father as the Creator and Sustainer of our world, the ever-watchful Guardian of His children on the earth. Then the *Te Deum* carries on our thoughts to God as He is, in the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and to the work of infinite love for man's redemption, framed in the eternal counsels of God, and wrought out in the Incarnation of Christ, our present Saviour and our future Judge. Then the *Benedictus* continues the strain, and points to the types and prophecies by which the great event in the world's history was through long ages foreshadowed, and the preparation made for Christ's coming in the fulness of time.

So far the morning Canticles carry us. Then the *Magnificat* speaks in words of adoring gratitude of the amazing spiritual blessings granted even now to all those who are in true spiritual union with Christ, 'lowly in spirit,' 'hungering after righteousness' in Him. And lastly, the *Nunc Dimittis* lifts up the spirit into the realms of eternal peace, expressing the calm holy trust with which the soul may commit itself to God and look forward to eternity, now that for all men—Jews and Gentiles alike—salvation is both gained and revealed in Christ.

It has been necessary to compress as far as possible what was to be said on the Canticles one by one. It remains to urge all to give a fresh vigour and meaning to them, as they offer them, not only by keeping in mind the matter of them in themselves, but by connecting them also with the Psalms and Lessons from Holy Scripture with which they are intermixed.¹ As the heart, when lifted up to God in praise, should

¹ 'A leading principle of all the Canticles appears to be that of connecting the written with the personal Word of God: and that as

be thereby raised and incited to a more ardent desire for fuller knowledge of Him; so, reversely, the truths declared to us in the Lessons respecting God and His dealings with mankind, especially when taken in connection with the whole Scripture of which they are a part, 'single streaks of the cloudless depth of light which beams from the great orb of Scripture,' should waken up in a more fervent and intelligent way our hymn of praise. That hymn of praise, we believe, shall last on through eternity, as it blends even now with the songs of the angels round the throne. Even now we are with the angels, as our hearts pour forth their grateful adoration to God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of men; not only infinite in wisdom and power and justice and holiness, but as infinite too in love—the love which first created and then redeemed our world, even at the price of the gift of His own eternal Son, and which has vouchsafed to reveal clearly to us the scheme formed in the counsels of infinite goodness for the redemption of man, and then for his progressive sanctification, or growth in holiness, through the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart. If the Psalmist, under the old dispensation, could say, 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His Holy Name,' far more should we, in view of God's love in the redemption of the world, and the fulness of spiritual light which He has mercifully poured forth upon us, lift up our spirits to Him, offering to Him the tribute of heartfelt adoration and praise.

much in respect to the Old Testament Lessons as to those taken out of the Gospel or other parts of the New Testament. . . It may also be observed that the Canticles are set where they are with reference to Divine Revelation as a whole, given to mankind by God in His mercy and love, and therefore a matter for deepest thankfulness and most exalted praise.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

It may be noted, in connection with this, that the three Canticles taken from the New Testament are all drawn from the Gospel by St. Luke, the Gospel designed, it would seem, more especially for the enlightenment of the Gentile world.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LESSONS.

INTERMINGLED with the Psalms, the Canticles, and the Creed, which form the main component parts of the Service of Praise, are those portions of Holy Scripture which we speak of as the 'Lessons' for the day.

Very wisely are they thus introduced. For the work of Praise leads to a more thoughtful and intelligent study of Holy Scripture, as the mind comes back, reversely, from that study more prepared and stirred for the Service of Praise. The more we know of God, as He has revealed to us His Being and His great spiritual werk of love for man, the more are our hearts lifted up to the desire of giving glory to Him.¹ And, reversely, the more our hearts have been raised heavenward, in the praise and adoration of the Most High, the more sincere and fervent will be our desire to grow in the knowledge of Him and of His will.

¹ Contrasting the offices of the East and West in this respect, Mr. Freeman writes:—'The East, by making the Psalms all her meditation, seems to declare her mind that praise is the only way to knowledge: the West, by her combined Psalm and Lection system, that knowledge is the proper fuel of praise.'—Vol. i. p. 274.

'Hence descended' (he writes in another place) 'to the English Church of the present day her still compound, though no longer involved system of Psalms, Lessons, and responsive Canticles, woven together into one complex act of praise and meditation; an act that meditates still as it praises, and, as it meditates, adores' (i. p. 129).

Also the Lessons and the Psalms have this in common, that in both we are being instructed respecting God. For it is impossible to enter into the meaning of the words which we utter when offering our tribute of praise, without breathing somewhat of the spirit, and drinking in unconsciously the knowledge, of the writer whose words we are making our own.¹

With regard to the manner in which Holy Scripture is read by us, it will be observed that, while a shorter portion is appointed to be read on the Sunday as the Epistle and the Gospel assigned for the day, a larger portion is directed to be read as the first and second Lesson of each day throughout the week.

And in thus appointing these larger portions of Holy Scripture to be read, our Church has returned to the custom of ancient times. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, speaking of the Sunday Service in his own day, says, 'The memorials of the Apostles or writings of the Prophets are read as long as the time permits.' And one of the old Liturgies has a peculiar expression, coined apparently to express in an emphatic way how fully the Holy Scripture was read at that time: 'Then are read *right through and through*² the oracles of the Old Testament, and the Prophets: and the Incarnation of Christ is shown forth, and His Passion.'³

¹ 'Some of the Psalms, it is to be noted (as, e.g., Ps. xxxii., which is the first of 13 so inscribed), bear the words "*Le-Maskil*," i.e., "for reflection, instruction, warning, admonition," as their heading. *Maskil* means a Psalm of Reflection, or Admonition, or Intelligence. LXX. *Συνέσεως*. Jer. *Eruditio*.' —Kay, 'on the Psalms,' Appendix II., and note on the Title of Psalm xxxii.

² *Διεξοδικάτατα*, 'most thoroughgoingly' or 'most throughoutly in the most full and thorough way.'

³ Freeman, i. p. 342. The whole passage on the custom of the early Church with respect to the reading of Holy Scripture is well worthy of careful perusal. He remarks further (p. 344) that 'In our

Gradually, in course of time, the opposite tendency arose, and only very short passages of the Bible were read in the Service. Even before the Reformation, however, a reaction as to the method of reading the Scriptures had begun. ‘But it remained for our revisers to bring back the Apostolic largeness of Scripture reading, and to restore to the people something of that historical knowledge of Holy Scripture which must, after all, be the basis of all other.’¹ Adopting the division into chapters made by Cardinal Hugo de Santo Charo about A.D. 1250, they appointed as a general rule one chapter from the Old, and one from the New Testament to be read at each Service of Morning and Evening Prayer, not on the Sundays only (to which alone the rule of the primitive Church applied), but on every other day of the week as well. And though the old system of reading exactly one chapter from the Old and the New Testaments respectively has not been followed in the arrangement of the new Lectionary, the general plan of appointing a sufficiently large portion from each part of Holy Scripture to be read has still been retained.

Each method, in fact, that of reading shorter, detached passages of God’s Word (such as those chosen for the Epistle and Gospel of the week), and that of reading fuller portions at once (such as those chosen for the Lessons of the day), has its own special advantage. By the shorter passage the attention can be fixed more on a particular point, and the meaning of the words studied in detail, and thus the ‘veil of familiarity’ which hangs over very much of Holy Scripture may be removed. It is well, therefore, that the generally brief portions which form the Epistle and Gospel should hold the place which they do, and that they should be studied in more

own ancient Lection system, it was the Old *or* the New Testament that was read; never *both* on the same day.’

¹ Freeman, i. 344.

minute detail, as giving the truth which the Church would have us set more especially before our view during the week. While, at the same time, the Daily Lessons, in their greater fulness, give a wider view of the teaching of Holy Scripture as a whole. It is as we fix our attention on a single object or feature, that we gain a minute knowledge of it in detail. To get a general idea of the scene, and of the bearing of the parts one on another, it is necessary to take a wider view.

It is to be observed further, as to our method of reading Holy Scripture, that the Old Testament Scriptures are read first, and then those of the New Testament. For the Old Testament leads up to the New, and prepares the way for it. As reversely, according to the well-known saying, the New Testament develops what was involved in the Old.¹ In a somewhat similar way the Epistle precedes the Gospel in the Service of the Sunday, that the place of honour may be given to that portion of the New Testament which speaks most directly of the Redeemer of mankind.

The general principle on which the Lessons are chosen in our Church is this. The first Lessons for Daily Morning and Evening Service are taken from the Old Testament, which is read through more or less consecutively, with the exception that through the season of Advent, and for a short time before

¹ 'Novum Testamentum in Veteri latet. Vetus Testamentum in Novo patet.' On the importance of reading *both*, Mr. Freeman observes (contrasting our present method with that formerly in use): 'We may remark the more *equable* conception which such a method as ours tends to generate and maintain in the mind, as to the importance of studying all parts of Holy Scripture. It may safely be said, that either the Old Testament without the New, or the New without the Old, were equally an enigma. The two are mutually interpretative on a basis of perfect equality. And if in other points of view the New Testament challenges superior importance, this is fully recognised by its being read *thrice* through in the year, the Old but once' (vol. i. p. 344).

and after it, the first Lessons are taken mainly from the prophet Isaiah, which thus is read out of its due course. The first Lessons for the *Sundays* follow an independent cycle, being selected for the most part from the Books of the Old Testament in their order, beginning from the Book of Genesis on Septuagesima Sunday, as the first day of the season preparatory to Lent. The first Lessons for the Saints' days, again, are chosen independently, such chapters being selected as seem most appropriate to the particular day.

One advantage should be remarked which there is in having the first Lessons thus fixed, while the second Lessons (as will be seen) vary on the Sunday with the day on which the Sunday happens to fall. For in this way there is a constantly new combination of passages from the Old and New Testaments produced; and a continually new illustration of one part of Holy Scripture by another is derived from the juxtaposition of two passages, one of which changes year by year.¹

¹ The remarks of Mr. Freeman hold to a certain extent now, though in the New Lectionary the system is in some measure changed. 'The cycle according to which Scripture is read on week-days in the English Church has this incidental advantage, that it produces a variety of instructive combinations. The self-same chapter of the New Testament appears at three periods of the year in conjunction with as many different chapters of the Old Testament: and a watchful and well-trained eye will continually discern beautiful correspondences or contrasts, of the same kind as are often so finely worked out and stereotyped for us in the old offices. That system, however, excluded these fortuitous combinations between Lesson and Lesson, the configuration of Scripture, for a given day, being fixed. Our Sunday cycle, in which one Lesson is regulated by the season, the other by the day of the month, presents a still more varied field for such combinations. The Proper Lessons are a finely-conceived addition to our ritual possessions. While deferring in a great degree to the old mind of the Church, and taking counsel of it, they are as a whole perfectly original in conception, and proceed mainly on the principles above traced out, of presenting large tracts of the Divine doings in old time,

The plan adopted for the arrangement of the second Lessons is this. The New Testament is read through in them more or less consecutively twice. And with the beginning of the natural year the Gospel of St. Matthew is begun in the second Lessons of the Morning Service; while in those of the Evening Service, the Acts of the Apostles are begun. And about the time that the Acts and the Epistles have been read through in this way, the Gospels in the second Lessons of the morning will have been finished; and then the Acts will be begun in the Morning Service, and the Gospels in the Evening. In this way the second Lessons are taken mainly, one from the Gospels, and one from the Acts, Epistles, or Revelation throughout the year, and the whole of the New Testament, speaking generally, is read through twice. On festival days, such special chapters, or portions of chapters, are selected (in the same way as special first Lessons are chosen), as may seem most suitable for that which the day is set apart to commemorate.

The adoption of the method of reading the New Testament which we use at present, is due to the framers of the New Lectionary. Before, the Gospels and Acts only were read in the Morning, and the Epistles only in the Evening Service, throughout the year. To them also we owe the appointment of portions of a chapter, sometimes of portions of two consecutive chapters, instead of the one chapter which was always appointed to be read throughout before; the limits of

wrought up, as far as the case admitted of, into a harmonised picture of the elder economy. For the Festival Cycle, unless where there were Lessons especially proper, the principle was adopted of selecting them from the didactic books, as Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and the apocryphal ones of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus. Such Lessons could hardly fail to illustrate appropriately the general idea of the saintly character, and had further the advantage, compared with historical chapters, of being intelligible each one by itself' (i. 347).

which single chapter were not passed, however the sense might make it fitting that additional verses should be read. At the same time the revisers have added alternative chapters, to be used where there are two Services after the Morning Service, afternoon and evening as well.¹ And they have omitted some chapters, as undesirable or less desirable than others for public reading, which were used before; while they have substituted in their stead some chapters, especially out of the Books of Chronicles in the Old Testament, and the Book of the Revelation in the New, which were not appointed to be read before.

One practical point, it only remains to add, must always be kept in mind in the study of the Word of God. It has one great object in view throughout. Various as are the books of which the Bible is made up—historical, didactic, prophetic, poetical, apocalyptic, and epistolary—one great aim underlies them all, and enters into every portion of them all. They are not designed to give a record of events, or to lay down the rules of morality, or to refine the feelings and cultivate the taste, or to confirm by the evidence of prophetic power the authority with which they speak, or to disclose before man's wondering gaze some portion of the mysterious future and the equally mysterious past—these are not the objects which Holy Scripture has in view. Narrative, prophecy, epistolary writing, and the like, may be the form under which, or vehicle by which, the essential purpose is carried out. The outward form may be affected by the main truth to be communicated, and that truth may influence the matter through

¹ The permission given now to adopt a shortened form instead of the Evening Service, where a third and full Service is held on the Sunday, as well as the power granted of curtailing to some extent the Daily Service at the discretion of the minister (referred to in ch. ii.), are notable features of improvement at the present time.

which it is conveyed, just as the outer and inner life of each individual man continually interact one upon the other to a certain degree. But the one great object throughout Holy Scripture is *the Revelation of God to man*. It aims at showing to man what God is, in such ways, and in so far as, man's faculties are able to comprehend the Being of God. To show what God is, in His relation to our world, and to man more especially, as the head of that world, under God; and to show what man was designed by God to be; what he is in the corruption of his fallen nature; and what he yet may be, through living spiritual union with the new Head of Creation, by God's grace—these, and such-like spiritual truths, it is the object of Revelation to disclose—truths which man's unaided powers could not have discovered for themselves. Those truths are wrapped up in narrative or prophecy, in proverb or psalm. Specially, the Bible is the Revelation of the one great central truth, the Incarnation of the Son of God, as an event to come, as an event fulfilled, as an event regarded in its mighty issues on all the future of mankind.

And therefore it follows that to have gained a thorough acquaintance with the events recorded in the Bible, and to have ascertained their exact chronological arrangement, their corroboration of facts recorded by uninspired historians: to have studied profoundly the meaning of the words of the Bible in detail, and traced the connection of the thought in the various parts: to know minutely the points of geography and topography by which an interest may be shed and a light thrown over what would be otherwise uninteresting or unmeaning detail, even to have systematised the principles and rules scattered up and down the Bible for the regulation of man's moral life—is not to have entered into the real meaning of Holy Scripture to the full. It is possible to have done all this, and yet to have missed the vital, the essential truth.

All these studies are most valuable as accessories, but they are only accessories and aids to the acquisition of that which lies deeper still. The knowledge of God, growing continually more deep and more full, and inspiring more and more the love of Him: the knowledge of man's weakness, and of his inability in himself to live, as he should, to the glory of God and in perfect conformity to God's will: the knowledge of God's scheme of infinite love for the restoration and sanctification of man in the Atonement of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit coming forth from heaven to dwell in man and prepare him for the life of heaven with God; this knowledge of God, and of man in the relation of his spiritual being to God, this knowledge of what God would have man be and do in the period of his probation on earth for a future state of eternal existence—this it is the great object of Holy Scripture to impart. And if we rise from the study of the Bible at any time without having gained somewhat more of knowledge of God, and of real practical understanding of His will, we have, as far as the true purpose of Holy Scripture is concerned, failed in our study; we have been occupied with the shell only, while missing the kernel inside; we shall have been engrossed in examining and admiring the casket, without, perhaps, catching even a glimpse of the priceless jewel which is enshrined within.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CREED.

AFTER Holy Scripture has been read, the Creed follows. And this is the natural order. For Holy Scripture, as was said in the last chapter, teaches what is needful for us to know respecting God. And the Creed naturally follows after it, as gathering up in a short form the main truths which we are thus taught, and of our belief in which we are directed to make open profession, according to the words of St. Paul, 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Rom. x. 10).

The Creeds (which take their name from the Latin word 'Credo,' *I believe*), as summaries of Divine truth, it must be understood, have no independent origin. They are simply the expression of what has been gathered out of Holy Scripture, and derive their authority for their every statement from it. In Scripture itself there are found only the slight germs of such creeds; for *systems* of belief and duty are markedly absent from it. St. Peter summed up his belief, in answer to our Lord, in the words, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (St. Matth. xvi. 16). And St. Paul, writing to Timothy, whom he had left in charge of the church at Ephesus, sums up to him the 'mystery of godliness,' thus: 'God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory' (1 Tim. iii. 16). But creeds, or sum-

maries of belief, were formed in early times of the Church. And they gradually became more full as different elements of truth were brought into prominence one by one, and, more especially, as different points of the faith were assailed, and needed therefore to be more emphatically maintained.

Three great Creeds are received very generally, and employed by us in our public Service to this day: namely, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. Of these the first represents most simply what the Apostles taught, and therefore is called by us the Apostles' Creed. The second was framed, as far as the words 'And I believe in the Holy Ghost,' at the Council of Nicæa, held A.D. 325, and completed at the Council of Constantinople, held in 381. As these Councils of the Church were convened to meet the errors of those who denied the perfect equality in the Godhead of the second and third Persons of the Holy Trinity, the Creed drawn up at them is naturally especially full in its second and third portions, those which relate to the nature and work of God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. In the first of the three portions of the Creed, that which refers to the first Person in the Godhead, it more nearly coincides with the Apostles' Creed. The third Creed, the Athanasian, may perhaps be considered to bear that name as representing most exactly the teaching of Athanasius, the earnest maintainer of the truth in his time. The difficult question of its origin, and of the date of its composition, has been revived of late. But the discussion of such questions with regard to this and the other Creeds, would draw us away too far from our general subject, and forms part rather of the general examination of the origin and value of the Creeds of the Church.¹

¹ The Athanasian Creed had been referred by Waterland to Hilary of Arles, who died in 449 A.D. But it is assigned by Hervey to Victricius, Bishop of Rouen, fifty years earlier. This would make its

The use of such creeds in public and private worship prevailed naturally in very early times. 'Take the rule of faith which is called the symbol or creed,' St. Augustine writes; 'say it daily in the morning before you go forth; at night before you sleep.' And again, 'Say your creed daily morning and evening.'¹ 'Rehearse your creed to God,' St. Chrysostom writes; 'say not, I said it yesterday, I have said it to-day already; say it again, say it every day; guard yourselves with your faith. And if the adversary assault you, let the redeemed know that he ought to meet him with the banner of the cross and the shield of faith; "above all, taking the shield of faith."² The recital of the Nicene Creed in the public Service began very early, about 471; and was used especially in the Eastern Church as a safeguard against the Arian heresy.³ And, in a similar way, the Apostles' Creed was said in the ordinary Daily Service, even in Anglo-Saxon times.⁴ The Athanasian Creed is appointed in the Sarum Breviary to be sung daily after the Psalms and before the Prayers. In the Roman Breviary it is ordered to be used on the Sundays only.⁵ 'In 1549 the Apostles' Creed was date to be about the close of the fourth or beginning of the fifth centuries. 'Some imputations had been cast upon the orthodoxy of this apostolic Bishop and Confessor; and there are strong reasons for supposing that he composed it as an answer to these charges of false doctrine, and thus expounded his belief before *Anastasius*, who was Bishop of Rome until April A.D. 402.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

¹ Quoted by Sparrow, 'Rationale,' p. 48.

² Quoted by Sparrow, p. 48.

³ Procter, p. 228.

⁴ Procter, p. 229.

⁵ Procter, p. 230. 'It was the ancient custom' (it is observed in the Annotated Book of Common Prayer) 'of the Church of England, from the 7th century to the 16th, to sing the *Symbolum Athanasii* every day, rather as a kind of Christian Psalm than a Creed, immediately after the Psalms of the office, that of Prime. In the reformed Breviary of Quignonez it was confined to Sunday use.'

appointed to be said ordinarily in the part of the Service in which it now occurs; and the Athanasian Creed in its stead upon the six festivals of Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity. In 1552, seven Saints' days were added to these festivals, so that this Creed should be used about once a month during the year.'¹

'Both minister and people are directed to repeat the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds, because it is the profession of every person present. It is to be repeated *standing*, to express our resolution to hold fast the true faith. The custom, still maintained in many churches, of turning to the east while repeating the Creed is very ancient, and originated in the practice of the Jews, who always turned their faces in the direction of Jerusalem, towards the mercy-seat of the holy Temple, when they prayed. The custom was early introduced amongst the ceremonies of baptism, in which it was usual to renounce the devil with the face to the west, and then turn to the east to make the covenant with Christ; the east, or region of the rising sun, being regarded as the source of light. Hence the turning to the east became associated with the recitation of the Creed.'²

There are three chief ways in which the Creeds may be regarded. And it will be seen that the Creed holds very fittingly the place which it has in the Daily Service, in whichever of the three lights it may be viewed. For a creed may be considered either as a *summary of belief*, or as a *hymn of praise*, or as a *foundation of prayer*. As a summary of belief the Creed naturally follows the reading of those scriptures of the Old and New Testament, the object of which is, as was said in the preceding chapter, to reveal the nature and

¹ Procter, p. 230. 'Its recitation thus becomes a monthly instead of a weekly one, as in the Roman, or a daily one, as in the ancient English Church.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

² Procter, p. 231.

will of God to man. It gathers up in a short form, and brings forcibly before the mind, those truths, some of which are expressed or implied in almost every page of the Word of God. Then, again, as a hymn of praise, which it truly is, and in which light it may be viewed when being offered by us as we recite it in the Service of the Church, the Creed fitly takes its place as part of the combination of Lessons, Canticles, and Psalms, the great end of which is to lead up the mind to the faithful, earnest adoration and worship of God. In lifting up our hearts to Him, declaring our sincere acceptance of all that which He has vouchsafed to reveal respecting the nature and attributes of His mysterious Being, we do indeed, we believe, offer to Him our most acceptable service of praise. And once more, as prayer to God must be based on a belief in His existence, His power, His wisdom, His love, His willingness to hear and answer the supplications of His children on earth, when they breathe up to Him, in the Spirit, the breath of fervent, trustful prayer, the Creed which sums up this our belief as to the Being and attributes of God must really lie as the basis of prayer. And the Creed, accordingly, may well stand at the junction point of the second and third portions of our Service, closing the Service of Praise, and leading on to that service of communion with God in petition, to which we more commonly limit the name of Prayer.¹

These thoughts as to the use which may be made of them suggest in a very practical way the value of the Creeds of the Church. They are a precious intellectual heritage, bequeathed by the combined devotion and wisdom of former times, occupied, under the guidance of the Spirit, in searching out

¹ 'In dicendis precationibus hic ordo servetur: *primo*, recitetur Symbolum Apostolicum, ut cogitemus quem Deum invocamus, et inter precandum alloquamur.'—Melanchthon (in 'Formae Precationum Melanchthonis a Luca Backmeistro collectae.')

the spiritual truths which the Bible reveals. They are the results of struggles long and earnestly waged between the opposers and the defenders of what is taught in God's Word. They are helps by the aid of which the simple may learn easily the main truths which lie, commonly, implied in the Bible, rather than stated in express doctrinal form, and which, thus received, each one may go on to verify for himself. Probably it is because we possess the Creeds, and use them so familiarly, that we do not recognise their true importance. We hardly realise what it would be to want them. And yet it is difficult to conceive a more simple and comprehensive summary of Divine truth than that contained in, at least, the Apostles' Creed. And if the statements of the Athanasian Creed seem to us now too abstruse and metaphysical: if its condemnation appears at times unwarrantably sweeping, its language too severe; it must be remembered that it is framed according to the tone of thought prevailing at the time: that the truths of the spiritual, even more than those of the natural world, must necessarily assume a somewhat difficult form when they are treated in a scientific way; and that the Athanasian Creed does but echo the warnings of Holy Scripture, many times repeated, against those who wilfully reject what God has revealed respecting Himself and His scheme of infinite mercy for the restoration of mankind.¹ In this the Church is but faithful to her trust, and acts with a severity really charitable in reminding men of the great danger of wilful unbelief pointed out by the Word of God itself. When

¹ On the view of the primitive Church respecting those who had not believed, because they had never had the opportunity of knowing Christ, but yet had lived uprightly according to such light as they possessed, see the striking passage of Justin Martyr, in his first 'Apology,' ch. 46. Οὐ (Χριστοῦ), he writes, τὰς γένος ἀθρόκτον μέτεσχε· καὶ οἱ μετὰ λόγου βιώσαντες χριστιανοί εἰσι, καὶ θεοὶ ἐνομίσθησαν.

Holy Scripture declares 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts xvi. 31): and again, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned' (St. Mark xvi. 16): and once more, 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed' (Gal. i. 9): it is surely from no tender care for man's well-being that we fear to put men in mind of these things, or rather, that we fear to let each one who believes in Scripture remind himself that 'before all things it is necessary to hold the Catholic faith: which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastinglly.'¹

There is one other point of view from which the Creeds may be regarded which it will be right to touch upon, as it rises out of the subject with which we are engaged. All the great truths of faith involve, as their correlatives, certain practical duties corresponding to them. A Christian creed becomes, therefore, a groundwork of Christian duty. And as the Creed is recited by us, there should pass before our thoughts for the moment the various duties which the several portions of the Creed involve. Truly and worthily to say 'I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost,' is to say 'I accept, and purpose to act up to (God helping me), so far as I can, the duties which flow out of my known relation to God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the Sanctifier, of man.' And, similarly, practical duties are suggested by, really involved in, each other portion of a Christian's creed.

¹ 'The condemnation contained in two or three clauses of this Creed belongs not to all who cannot understand or even approve every expression in it; but only to such as deny in general the Trinity in Unity, or Three Persons who are One God. This alone is said to be the Catholic Faith.'—Archbishop Secker. *Six Sermons*, p. 76. See on the whole subject the Declaration of Convocation of the English Church.

PART III.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VERSICLES PRECEDING THE COLLECTS.

THERE only remains now for consideration the last portion of the Daily Service, that which consists of the Collects, and Prayers, and General Thanksgiving, with which the Service, from the Creed onwards, concludes, and of which what may be called the 'Service of Petition and Thanksgiving' is composed. It is to the preparatory part that we are to confine our attention first.

This portion of the Service, it will be observed, opens with two short Sentences, or *Versicles* as they are styled, which were of very early use in the Church, especially in the Eastern part of it, to which, according to the tradition handed down in one of the ancient Councils, they were delivered by the Apostles themselves.¹ The first, 'The Lord be with you,'

¹ Wheatly, p. 150. 'This divine salutation,' Bishop Sparrow writes, 'taken out of Holy Scripture, was frequently used in ancient Liturgies before prayers, before the Gospel, before the sermon, and at other times; and that by the direction of the holy Apostles, says the second Council of Bracara. It seems intended as an introit or entrance upon another sort of Divine Service. And a good introduction it is, serving as a holy excitation to attention and devotion, by reminding the people what they are about, namely, such holy services as, without God's assistance and special grace, cannot be performed. And therefore, when they are about these services, the Priest reminds them of it by saying The Lord be with you. And it is a most excellent and seasonable prayer for them, in effect thus much, The Lord be with you, to lift up your hearts and devotions to His service. The Lord be with

is the salutation of Boaz in the Book of Ruth,¹ adopted by St. Paul in his Epistles, as in 2 Thess. iii. 16, 'The Lord be with you all.' The second is also taken from St. Paul, who concludes both his Epistle to the Galatian Church, and his second Epistle to Timothy, with it.² They are introduced very fitly where they stand, with reference both to what has gone before and to what follows.³ For, with reference to those passages of Holy Scripture which have been heard, and the Creed which has been offered, they are the salutation of Christians recognising in one another members of the same body, sharers in the same blessed faith; and they are, as it were, a congratulation and thanksgiving, pronounced by each over the others for this great blessing, possessed in common, of a true knowledge of God, answering to that salutation by the angel Gabriel of the Virgin Mary, 'The Lord (is) with thee; ' and they are also to be viewed as a prayer offered by minister and people, each for the other, that they may be kept steadfast in this true faith, and live a life conformable to it, and built up upon it, unto the end. While again, with reference to the prayers which are to form the remainder of the Service, these Sentences are a prayer that God will be with us, raising up our spirits by His Holy Spirit, and quickening them to earnest prayer. But that which should be specially marked, is the mutual

you, to accept your services. The Lord be with you, to reward you hereafter with eternal life.'—'Rationale,' p. 53.

¹ Ruth ii. 4.

² 'It is as much as this: Thou art about to offer up prayers and spiritual sacrifices for us; therefore we pray likewise for thee, that He, without whom nothing is good and acceptable, may be with thy spirit, while thou art exercised in these spiritual services, according to St. Paul (1 Cor. 14, 15).—*Bishop Sparrow*, p. 54.

³ These Sentences were also, as L'Estrange remarks, of old used as a notice of transition to some new department of service. They are therefore very appropriate here, where we pass on from the other elements of service to that of Prayer.

intercession of minister and people which these Sentences convey; showing an earnest desire on the part of the minister, that the people should be kept firm in the faith, and enabled to worship God in spirit and in truth; and an equally anxious care on the part of the people that the minister should be enabled by God's Holy Spirit to perform well his spiritual services, and fulfil his high duties, and rise up to his high responsibilities, and set forth by his life and his teaching the glory of God, and the good of his fellow men, and persevere unto the end in love, and obtain his glorious crown.¹

After these two Sentences of reciprocal salutation by minister and people, there follows the exhortation of the minister, 'Let us pray.' It was the custom in the ancient Liturgies to exhort the people in the words, 'Let us pray earnestly; ' 'yea, still more earnestly.'² And very fit it is that we should thus be reminded of the great work in which we are about to engage, since prayer is the great means of obtaining the blessing of God in things spiritual and temporal for others and for our-

¹ The brief interchange of benediction between priest and people, 'The Lord be with you. And with thy spirit,' is of known antiquity, and seems to be alluded to in St. Paul's 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit' (Gal. vi. 18). St. Chrysostom remarks that the people's rejoinder, 'and with thy spirit,' is a recognition of the absolute need the clergy had of the Spirit to effect anything. It is a desire for the 'stirring up of the gift,' and spiritual power, 'that is in them,' by virtue of their ordination. It was, therefore, in the ordinary offices of the West, specially prefixed to the Collects: prayer being the 'proper weapon of their ministry.'

It may be remarked, too, that this interchange between clergy and people of mutual prayer, and desire for each other's good success in the spiritual work of the sanctuary, is entirely in the spirit and to the purpose of the old interchange of *Confiteor* and *Misereatur*. It is still to us, what that formula was designed to be, a touching recognition of the equal need, under difference of position, of clergy and people; and well illustrates the mutually sustaining character of their common worship.—*Freeman*, i. 362.

² Sparrow, 'Rationale,' p. 55.

selves, and the highest part of Christian duty, as being the direct communion of man's spirit with God, part of that worship of Him which is one great end of man's existence on earth, and is to enter into his eternal work in heaven. And we need to be specially urged to engage fervently in this work of prayer for the further reason that prayer is so difficult a work to perform well. It was said by a hermit whom Melancthon mentions, 'There is nothing harder than to pray ;'¹ and Satan, we believe, knowing the mighty efficacy of sincere prayer, labours especially to hinder our prayers. And we do, in an especial way, dishonour God, and tempt Him to visit us with punishment, if we worship Him vainly, drawing near to Him with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him. Therefore we all need that word of exhortation and reminder, 'Let us pray.' Then there follow the three Sentences, 'Lord have mercy upon us,' &c., which 'Lesser Litany'² (as it has been

¹ Sparrow, p. 55.

² 'This short Litany (as it was called by some ancients), this most humble and piercing supplication to the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was frequently used in ancient Liturgies, as it is to be seen in them, and also in the second Council of Vasio. It was anciently called *ēkterh̄s lkeōla*, "the earnest or vehement supplication;" because as it is a most pathetic petition of mercy to every Person of the Blessed Trinity, so it was uttered by those primitive good men with much earnestness and intention of spirit, being sensible of their danger of sinking into endless perdition without the mercy of the Blessed Trinity. And therefore with no less earnestness than St. Peter cried, "Master, save," when he was sinking into the sea, did they cry out, "Lord have mercy upon us. God the Father have mercy, God the Son have mercy, God the Holy Ghost have mercy. Have mercy upon us in pardoning our sins, which make us worthy to be cast out of Thy favour, but unworthy to serve Thee; have mercy in helping our weakness and inability of ourselves to serve Thee. Many are our dangers, many are our wants, many ways we stand in need of mercy; therefore Lord, have mercy." This excellent comprehensive Litany is seasonable at all times and all parts of the Service; after our singing of hymns and psalms, after our hearing and confession of faith. Such is our unworthiness, such our weakness, that it cannot be thought amiss to beg God's mercy,

called) is the prelude to the *Prayer*, as the Doxology is to the *Praise* of the Service.¹ It is, it should be noticed, addressed to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity—the three clauses answering to the three Persons, and thus it fixes the object of Christian worship.² It is an earnest supplication of God that He will forgive the coldness of our hearts, the feebleness of our desires, the imperfection of our prayers; and that He will now raise our affections, and both enable us to pray, and also answer our prayers. And it is peculiarly fitted to be used before we offer the Lord's Prayer, since in that we address God as 'our Father,' and are taking on our lips the very words of our Blessed Lord. Well, then, is it first to entreat God's grace and mercy, that He may look on us as His children indeed. Well, too, is it that we should ask of Christ to enable us, by His Holy Spirit, to offer up acceptably, through Him, to the Father, the Prayer which He has Himself taught us to use. And accordingly (it will be observed) this Lesser Litany usually precedes the Lord's Prayer, except when (as at the opening of the Daily Service) the preparation for offering the Lord's Prayer assumes another form.

Then, the Lord's Prayer having been offered, as both a summary of prayer and a model on which it is to be framed, there follow some short Sentences with their Responses, preparatory to the series of Collects and petitions with which the office for Daily Service comes to a close. These sentences are said by the priest and people alternately, the priest offering them after we have prayed; such is our dulness and coldness in our prayers, that we had need pray, "Lord have mercy upon us."—*Bishop Sparrow*, p. 56.

¹ See Freeman, i. 363.

² Procter, p. 237. 'The "Mirror" also explains the triple repetition of the *Kyrie*, as a prayer against sins of thought, word, and deed.'—'Annotated Book of Common Prayer.' The 'Mirroure of our Lady' is the title of a Commentary on some of the Daily Services, published in 1530.

standing, to express that he is offering the prayer of the people through the one High Priest, and interceding for the people through the one Intercessor, Jesus Christ our Lord ; and the people declaring, in their Response, their own hearty concurrence in the prayer which he offers up in their name. The Sentences are drawn mainly from the Psalms, and correspond more or less to the selection of Sentences adopted in the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, according to the ancient Use. They are designed to attune the mind to offer, and, indeed, to lead it to pour forth, in a short form of fervent aspiration, those several petitions which are afterwards to be offered one by one in full.

Thus, the first Sentence, with its Response,

O Lord, show Thy mercy upon us.
And grant us Thy salvation,

taken from Psalm lxxxv. 7, gives the general subject of the Collect for the week, whatever its specific form may be.

Then, the second Sentence, and its Response,

O Lord, save the Queen.
And mercifully hear us when we call upon Thee,

taken from Psalm xx., and 1 Sam. x. 24, corresponds to the Prayer for the Queen and Royal Family.

Then, the next Sentence, and its Respond,

Endue Thy ministers with righteousness.
And make Thy chosen people joyful,

corresponds to the Prayer for the Clergy, and the congregation committed to their care. It is taken from Psalm cxxxii. 9, and seems to have formed a part of the Jewish Liturgy ; for it was solemnly used by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple (2 Chron. vi. 41).

Then the Sentence, and its Respond,

O Lord, save Thy people.
And bless Thine inheritance,

taken from Psalm xxviii. 9, represents the Prayer for all estates of Men.

Then the Versicles,

Give peace in our time, O Lord.
Because there is none other, &c.,

drawn from several places of the Psalms and other parts of Holy Scripture (such as Ps. xxix. 11; xxxiii. 16, 2 Chron. xxxii. 8), corresponds to the Collect for peace from without and from within.

And then, since there can be no true peace without the sanctifying grace of God, making men and nations to dwell in peace with one another, and giving inward peace to men within themselves, to the Collect for peace is joined the Collect for grace immediately to follow, represented by the Sentences from Ps. li. 10, 11—

O God, make clean our hearts within us.
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from us.

There are some few practical points suggested by this part of the Service on which, in concluding this chapter, it seems well to touch.

And first, the simple fact that the Church thus, in each of the three great portions into which the Service may be divided, takes care to prepare the mind of the worshipper, before directing him to engage in the work of confession, or praise, or petition, suggests of itself that duty of preparation before we enter on communion with God in prayer, which has been pointed out in this volume already in an earlier place. 'Before thou prayest, prepare thyself: and be not as one that tempteth God,' is a wise rule, which we do well to observe. We should never draw near to God, whether in our private chamber, or as members of a household, or with the congregation in the House of God, without devoting some

little time at least to reflection on the high work in which we are about to engage, that so we may come to it with an earnest, and humble, and pure heart, with a spirit lifted up above the things of earth, and with some clear view of the sins, the needs, the mercies, respecting which we are to commune with Him, and the glorious attributes which are to wake up our hymn of praise. 'If the arrow of prayer,' it has been truly said, 'is to enter heaven, it must be drawn from a heart which is fully bent.' The spirit must have been stirred, the mind exercised, if we are to pray 'with the spirit and with the understanding also,' to use the words of St. Paul.

Then, again, the intercessory character of these Versicles and Responds should be especially observed. Each one, by his natural constitution as a man—still more, each Christian man as a member of a great spiritual family, united together in Christ—should have at heart the interests of others as well as his own, and should therefore blend the thought of their well-being with that of his own, in his communion with God in prayer. Specially should the care of the interests of those entrusted to him be in the mind of the minister of God, and the desire for the well-being of the minister be in the thoughts of the people correspondently, when minister and people meet for the public worship of God in His House of Prayer. And this remembrance by each one of others before God should, by a natural reaction, intensify the good will of each towards others out of which it springs.

'If the Prophet David,' writes Bishop Sparrow, 'did think that the very meeting of men together in the House of God should make the bond of their love indissoluble (Psalm lv. 14), how much more may we judge it reasonable to hope that the like effects may grow in each of the people towards other, in them all towards the priest, and in the priest towards them, between whom there daily and interchangeably pass in the

hearing of God Himself, and in the presence of His **holy** angels, so many heavenly acclamations, exultations, provocations, petitions, songs of comfort, psalms of praise and thanksgiving. In all which particulars, as when the priest makes their suits and they with one voice say "Amen," . . . or when they mutually pray for each other, the priest for the people, and the people for him, as in the Versicle immediately before the Morning Collects; or when the priest proposes to God the people's necessities, and they their own requests for relief in every of them, as in the Litany; or when he proclaims the law of God to them, as in the Ten Commandments, they adjoining an humble acknowledgment of their common imbecility to the several branches thereof, together with lowly requests for grace to perform the things commanded, as in Kyries, or "Lord, have mercy upon us," &c. at the end of each Commandment—all these interlocutory forms of speech, what are they but most effectual, partly testifications, partly inflammations, of all piety.'

One other point must be noticed; the beautiful chain of holy prayer contained in these Versicles and their Responds, leading up to the Collects and Prayers in which the petitions briefly offered up in the Versicles are more fully expressed. Looking up to Him who 'declares His Almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity,' we beseech Him to have mercy on us all, and lead us to that salvation which He freely offers to all in Christ. Then we pray for those who are set over us in positions of authority in the State and in the Church, considering their great responsibilities, and remembering also St. Paul's words: 'I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority' (1 Tim. ii. 1); and those words of his, twice repeated emphatically, 'Brethren, pray for us,' (1 Thess. v. 25; 2. 3. 1).

Then we offer our prayer for all the people of God, that His blessing may be upon all the members of the spiritual Israel, the Church in the world. And then, as the chief forms of this blessing from God, we pray for peace within and from without, and for that grace of the Holy Spirit through which alone we can enjoy peace—peace from the assault of temporal and spiritual enemies; peace from the conflict of evil passions within; peace in the blessed thought of being at peace with God now, and being able to look forward in humble hope to a life with Him for ever in the realm of perfect and everlasting peace. What is there left to wish and to pray for, for others and for ourselves?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE COLLECTS AND CONCLUDING PRAYERS.

THE remaining chapter is to be devoted to the Collects and Prayers, and General Thanksgiving, which make up (with the opening Versicles and the Lord's Prayer) the last portion of the Service—that which may be called the 'Service of Petition and Thanksgiving'—and which bring the Service of Daily Morning and Evening Prayer to a close.

It may be well, first, to touch on the *meaning* of the word 'Collect.' There are various explanations given of the word. But the most probable seems to be that it signifies a prayer, the main point of which is *collected* or gathered up, and compressed into a short compass, from some special passages of Holy Scripture.¹ Thus the Collect for the week—the *first* Collect—is formed very much from the Epistle and Gospel of the Sunday to which it is assigned, and is, as it were, an epitome of them in prayer. Accordingly, on this view of the meaning of the word, the Collect for the week would alone most properly be styled the 'Collect.' While the two following prayers, as closely joined to it, might have its name carried on to them also, so that we speak ordinarily of the *three Collects* of Daily Morning and Evening Prayer.²

Then, as to the *composition* of the Collects and the Prayers

¹ See Freeman, i. 145. De Teissier, p. 241.

² 'The second Collects, however, at Morning and Evening Prayer, would (on the view of the meaning of the word Collect given above), have an independent right to the name to a certain extent. For they were

following, it is to be observed that they are for the most part derived from very ancient sources, and are framed generally on a uniform plan, and that with great brevity, so as to keep the mind on the stretch, and enable the worshipper to offer his prayer fervently to God. *First*, there is in each an address to God—generally to God the Father, but sometimes to our Lord—coupled with such attributes as more peculiarly relate to the subject of the petition to follow, or set forth His power and will to grant what we desire. Then, *secondly*, follows the request which we have to make, a request ‘congruous’ generally (as Bp. Sparrow writes) to the particular acknowledgment of the adorable perfection and goodness of God which has gone before. And then, *thirdly*, is added that one basis on which all our prayers to the throne of grace must rest, in the concluding words ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord.’¹

And this their form of composition, combined with their great brevity, makes them admirably fitted to sustain the spirit of devotion. The mind might flag, and the affections lose their intensity, if the objects to be desired were presented in one continuous prayer. But now, by the use of short forms, similar to those employed in the old Jewish ritual, and still more, similar to that prescribed by our Blessed Lord Himself, the attention is kept up, and the fervour of the spirit sustained, especially when, together with each petition to be offered, God our Father in heaven is brought before the mind, in His power and wisdom and love; and the merits and intercession of the Saviour are recalled; and the whole

originally the Collects for a special Eucharistic office on the subject of Peace, of which the Gospel was taken from St. John xx. 19—24, Christ giving His peace to His disciples after His resurrection.—*Freeman*, i. 70.

¹ ‘Itaque orationes nostras, vitam et sacrificia, et omnia nostra offerimus Tibi, Pater, assidue per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.’—St. Bernard, quoted in Sparrow.

congregation, saying with united voice 'Amen,' 'Be it so, O God,' declare their hearty concurrence in the prayer.

And now to say a few words on the Collects and Prayers in detail. The first Collect, as is well known, belongs to the Communion Service, and is drawn very much (as was said) from the Epistle and Gospel with which it is combined. It accordingly represents the element of *change* in the Daily Service, as it follows the progress of the Church's year through the leading events of our Blessed Saviour's life, and brings before the mind, one by one, the chief points of faith and practice and hope in the Christian's course. And as the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Sunday supply a special subject for meditation and prayer on the Sunday to which they belong, and a special train of thought with which the communicants may draw near to the Table of the Lord, the repetition of the Collect day by day throughout the week should keep in the memory of the worshippers the special truths and practical lessons taught, and prolong the feelings and aspirations awakened, and deepen the resolutions entered into, and recall the blessings received, on the Lord's day.

And because the blessings of the Gospel can only be received fully into a mind at peace, there follows the Collect for peace, in which we pray that God will give us peace, peace within, and peace, as far as it may be, from without; the peace within of a good conscience, at one with itself, and with God, and with its fellow men; and peace from without, where dangers and temptations are warded off by the guardian care of the Lord, or where (so far as, for wise purposes, they are permitted to exist) the spirit is yet preserved in perfect peace amid effort and danger, as reposing in perfect confidence upon God, doing all to His glory, trusting only to His strength.

The second Collect in the Morning naturally refers more to

the dangers from *without* by which our peace may be assailed during the work of the day. That for the Evening relates rather to the *inward* peace which the spirit desires in the quiet hours of evening and night.¹

Then, in the third Collect for the Morning, looking on to the day which lies before us, we offer up our prayer for grace, beseeching God to look on us with His favour, and support us with His spiritual help, and defend us by His Almighty power, and preserve us from putting ourselves into the way of danger, or of falling into sin, by the secret but mighty influence of His Holy Spirit in our hearts.

In the Evening, instead, in the third Collect we pray of God rather to make our darkness to be light (according to the words of King David, Ps. xviii. 28, in their deeper, spiritual, as well as their literal significance), lighting up within our hearts, as temples of God, the lamp of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of holiness and comfort and strength—to enable us to meet and overcome the temptations of the hours of darkness, and turning from us those temporal evils to which in the hours of the night we are more naturally exposed.²

We speak of these second and third Collects commonly as the Collects for *peace*, and for *grace* or *aid*. Perhaps we

¹ Dr. Kay observes on the words of Psalm lxiv. 1 :

Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation ;
Oh, guard my life from fear of the enemy,

‘that this petition “from fear” is embodied in both our Morning and Evening Prayer. “That we *may not fear* the power of any adversaries.” (Mg. 2 Coll.), “That we, being *defended from the fear* of our enemies,” &c. (Evg. 2 Coll.),’ p. 194.

² The metaphor of light, according to Scriptural usage (Mr. Procter observes), ‘will include the two ideas of knowledge and of comfort. We therefore pray that our understanding may be enlightened to perceive the sleepless Providence of God, and our hearts cheered with the assurance of His love’ (p. 246.)

should rather think of them as prayers for *peace through God's temporal and spiritual help*, and of the two Collects in each case as closely connected in this way. Only, in the Morning Collects, we pray rather for peace through God's good care, defending us *in* the midst of dangers, and preserving us by His grace from yielding to temptation, or exposing ourselves to danger unnecessarily. In the Evening Collects we rather pray for peace through God's Providence defending us *from* danger, putting temporal and spiritual evil, so far as may be, away from us, when it might come upon us unawares, keeping us when we cannot keep ourselves, and thus giving us peace.

These Morning and Evening Collects or Prayers for peace we may well extend in thought, as we offer them, with an even wider spiritual application. For while, as each day and night comes round to us, we return afresh to God to ask His help for the coming day and the coming night, we may think of the *day* of life, and health, and strength, and prosperity, and light; and again of the times of gloom, and sorrow, and weakness, and adversity, and ignorance, and death, which are recalled to us continually by the emblem of *night*. And with these thoughts before us, we may in spirit ask of God also to defend us against the dangers to which we are more especially liable at such times of prosperity and vigour, and of adversity and weakness, during our life on earth.

It would be well, indeed, if all could be persuaded to use these Collects heartily for peace through God's grace each day before going forth to their work in the morning, and before laying down their heads at night for rest.

The Collects for the week are generally (as has been observed before) derived from very ancient times. The second Morning Collect for peace is in the Sacramentary of Gelasius. The third Collect for grace is in the Sacramentary of Gregory, and in the Anglo-Saxon office.

Of the Evening Collects, the second¹ and third are both found in the Sacramentary of Gelasius (494), and both were used in the Sarum Breviary. The second Collect was used after the Litany, the third as an Evening Collect at the Service of Compline.

Here the Daily Service ended originally. It was not till the final revision of the Prayer Book in 1661, that the present rubric was introduced from the Scotch Prayer Book, ordering the remaining Prayers to be said whenever the Litany is not used.²

But the scheme of Prayers, as we now have it, is very complete. First, there are the prayers for the Queen and the Royal Family. This order, so far from being a mark of Erastianism (as it has been represented), is prescribed by St. Paul in his first Epistle to Timothy (ii. 1, 2), and was the order uniformly adopted in the offices of the Eastern Church.³

The Prayer for the Royal Family 'was added among the

¹ 'Coming, as it originally did, at the close of evening, the second Evening Collect formed a sweet cadence of prayer, fitly concluding with the following short but touching Collect. It follows up very exactly the tone of the *Nunc Dimittis*, and rings with a gentle echo of the peace that lies beyond this world, as well as of the peace which the world cannot give, nor the soul entirely receive, while it is in this world.'—Annotated Book of Common Prayer.

² See Procter, p. 239.

³ See Freeman, i. 365. 'St. Paul exhorts that "prayers and supplications be made for all men." In particular for kings. And the reason he gives sufficiently shows the necessity of praying particularly and especially for them; namely, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, which can hardly be done if they do not help towards it. For as the son of Syrach says, "As the Judge of the people is himself, even so are his officers. And what manner of man the ruler of the city is, such are all they that dwell therein" (Ecclus. x. 2). A good Josiah, Hezekiah, or David, promotes religion and honesty, and the right worship of God among the people. But a Jeroboam, by setting up calves in Dan and Bethel, makes all the people sin.'—Sparrow, p. 69. Cf. Prov. xxi. 1.

Collects at the end of the Litany in 1604, approved, if not composed, by Archbishop Whitgift, and placed in the Prayer Book among the changes made by way of explanation, after the Hampton Court Conference, on the authority of James I.¹ The Prayer for the Queen's Majesty was only actually introduced into our Prayer Book in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in 1559. But it is found in one of the earliest publications of the Revision in a somewhat different form.² As we now have it, it is taken almost verbatim from the Sacramentary of St. Gregory.³ It stands unrivalled in the grandeur of its opening invocation, showing all earthly powers as but reflections of the one great Power, and subordinate to it, and deriving their authority from it; and again lifting up the mind from earthly thrones and earthly loyalty to the loyal homage due to Him who sits on His throne in heaven overall. The direction of St. Paul respecting such prayers for those in authority was enforced by the Councils and great early writers of the Church, as Chrysostom, and Tertullian, and Cyril, and others, who expressly ordered that the well-being of those in authority should be a special subject of the prayers of the Church.

And, indeed, if there is kindled in our hearts the real desire for the well-being of those who for our sakes undertake, with the privileges and honours, the heavy cares also, and the great responsibilities of the administration of the State; if we think of the mighty power of example, and the influence which comes down from the private, and domestic, and political life of those in high station, to the humblest households and individuals of our land; if we admit the truth that 'the hearts of kings are in God's rule and governance,' and that He does 'dispose and turn them as it seems best to His

¹ Procter, p. 241.

² Freeman, i. 376, Procter, p. 329.

³ Wheatly, p. 157.

godly wisdom,' for the blessing or the bane of those over whom they rule; if we realise the need of wisdom and foresight in those who direct the councils of the nation, and frame her laws, we shall feel the need and the value of the earnest prayer, going up from the heart of a united people week by week, if not day by day, in behalf of that Sovereign whose virtues have specially endeared her to her people; and for all those who, under her, are entrusted with the charge of our state, that they may be preserved and governed by the guardian care, sanctified by the indwelling presence, of the Holy Spirit of God.

After this follows the Prayer for the Clergy and People, in which God is addressed as He 'who alone worketh great marvels,' with a reference, perhaps, to the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the feast of Pentecost, and with, no doubt, a more general reference to that wonderful power, whereby He, through the Holy Spirit, draws the hearts of men to the obedience and love of Him. And we pray of Him to send down His gracious Spirit upon the Bishops, as the heads of the Church, and on all Curates, i.e. all who, under the Bishop, are entrusted with the care of souls—not those merely who assist others in their cure, as we now use the word¹—and also on all Christian congregations committed to their care by Christ.

And this prayer is followed, during the session of Parliament, by a prayer for the guidance of its members in their arduous task. 'It was most probably composed by Bishop Laud, and first appeared in an "Order of Fasting" in 1625,

¹ 'By "Curates" here are not meant stipendiaries, as now it is used to signify; but all those to whom the Bishop, who is the chief pastor under Christ, hath committed the cure of souls of some part of his flock, and so are the Bishop's Curates. The Bishop, with these Curates, and a flock or congregation committed to their charge, make up a Church.'—*Sparrow*, p. 90. *See Cardwell, 'Conferences,'* p. 342.

and again in 1628 in a special Form of Prayer "necessary to be used in these dangerous times of war." In 1661 the prayer was inserted in a special Form for a Fast-day on the 12th of June, and again in the following January. And at the same time it was placed by Convocation in the Book of Common Prayer.¹

To the Prayer for the Parliament succeeds the most comprehensive prayer of all, that for All Conditions of Men, in which we pray first for all men, that they who as yet are ignorant of the name of Christ may be brought to know and love Him, and obtain salvation through Him; then more especially for His Church throughout the world; and then for those members of His Church who, by reason of their suffering affliction in some form, need our prayers, and should be specially remembered before God in them. The prayer is said to have been composed by Bishop Gunning, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge. 'In its original shape it is said to have been longer, and to have brought into one prayer the petitions for the King, Royal Family, Clergy, &c., which are scattered through several Collects. The Convocation, however, retained the Collects; and therefore threw out the corresponding clauses in this general Prayer, without altering the word *finally*, which seems to be needlessly introduced in so short a form.'²

With the Prayer for all Conditions of Men, the general

¹ Procter, p. 262. He observes that with regard to the expression 'Most religious and gracious King,' words which have been commonly supposed to have been introduced as a compliment to Charles II., that sovereigns are mentioned as *εὐσεβέστατοι καὶ πιστότατοι* in the Anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil.

² Procter, p. 262. On the words 'for Jesus Christ His sake,' Bishop Lowth observes: 'This is a mistake either of the printers or the compilers. It should be, "for Christis sake," or, as is now commonly written, "for Christ's sake,"' the 'is' being the English termination for the possessive or genitive case.—Quoted in Dr. Mant's Commentary.

and ordinary petitionary and intercessory portion of the Service may be said to end.¹

It was objected, however, to our Prayer Book in its earlier form that it contained no thanksgivings to God for blessings received, corresponding to the petitions to Him. And, accordingly, the General Thanksgiving supplies this want, expressing our gratitude to God for His mercies, especially for His infinite mercy in the redemption of our world by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and our desire that God would keep alive the sense of these His mercies in our hearts. But it also (which may have been the special purpose for which it was introduced), supplies a form of thanksgiving to God for the means of grace afforded us in the Service which we are just completing. And thus it corresponds to the hymn of praise and thanksgiving, beginning with 'Glory be to God on high,' with which the Communion Service concludes. The General Thanksgiving was added at the last revision after the Restoration of the Monarchy, and was the composition of Bishop Reynolds.²

And then the Service closes with what is called the Prayer of St. Chrysostom and the Prayer for God's blessing. The first is found in the Liturgies of St. Basil and St. Chrysostom, though there does not seem to be any authority for considering either of these to have been the author of it. 'Thus a form of prayer taken from the Eastern Church found an appropriate place in our Prayer Book, when a suitable concluding prayer was not found in the Western Breviaries.'³ It opens with gratitude to God for His mercy in having permitted us to meet and address Him in united prayer.

¹ The Ember Collects may best be considered in connection with the Ordination Service.

² Lathbury, 'History of Convocation,' quoted by Procter, p. 263. Procter, p. 243.

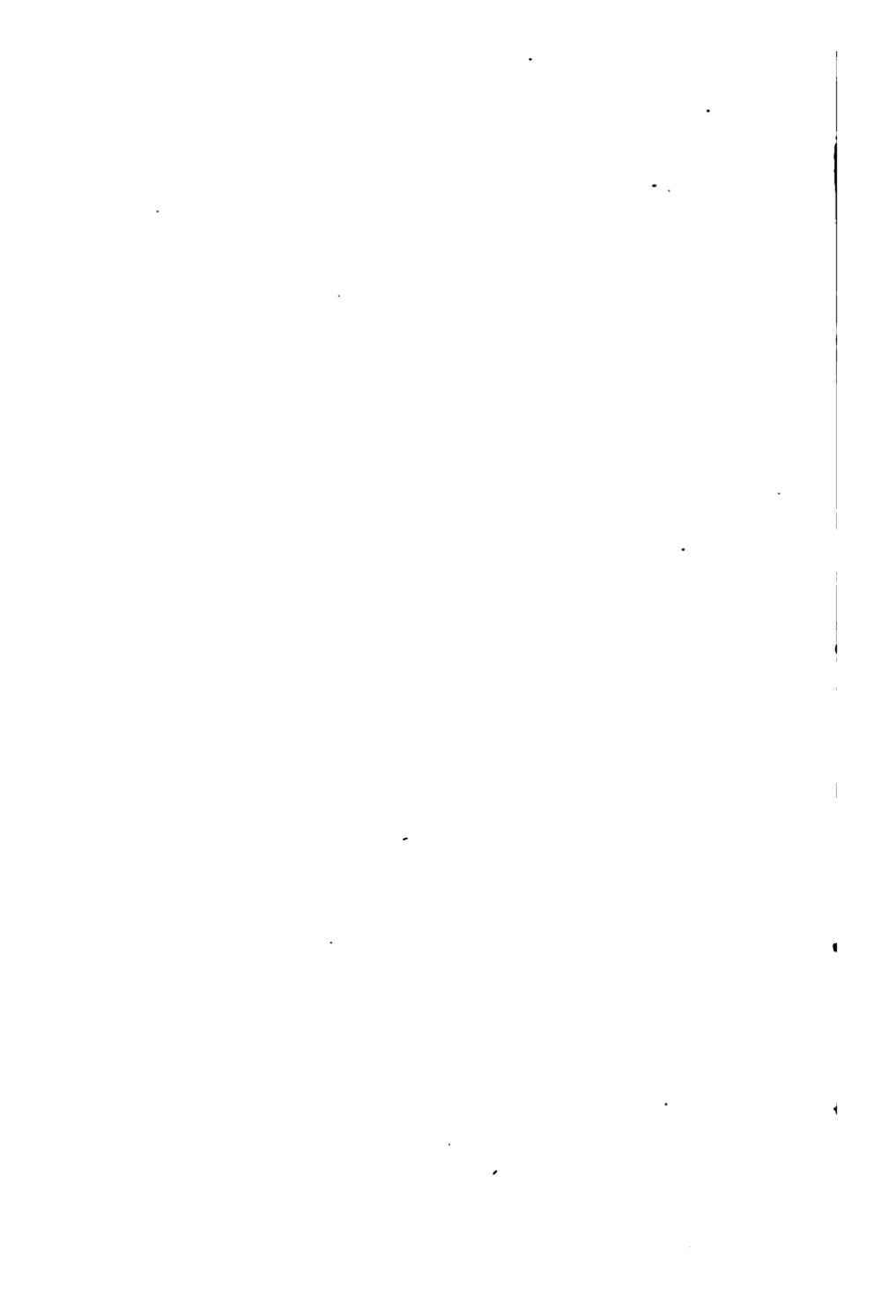
Then it represents before Him the promise of the Saviour that 'where two or three are met together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.' Resting on which promise, we go on to beseech God to hear the prayers and fulfil the desires which have gone up from the hearts of the united congregation; and that, not according to our imperfect views of what is best for us, but according to His own perfect wisdom and love. Thus we beseech Him to grant our desires and requests, in such way, and so far, as He in His infinite wisdom may know to be best. And in this way we shall have in this present life 'knowledge of His *truth*,' experimental proof how faithful He is to His promises made to all who earnestly and trustfully draw near to Him. While, extending our view beyond this passing life, we can look forward to being made fit for, and admitted to, that life everlasting, in which is included all the glory and joy which we hope for in the presence of God, and our blessed Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, and the angels of God for ever.

And now it only remains to conclude our solemn Service with the Prayer for God's blessing, which is to be offered not by the minister for the people standing, as the blessing is, but by the minister for himself and the people kneeling together as in prayer. It differs from the form which was appointed to be used in the old Jewish ritual, as is recorded in the viith chapter of the Book of Numbers, vv. 23-27. For though, in the form of blessing there given, *we* now can trace perhaps the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in the name of the Lord three times repeated; yet it was the unity of the Godhead which was kept prominently before the Jews, to prevent their falling into Polytheism. Whereas now with us the relation of all the three Persons in the Blessed Trinity to man's salvation is brought up in the benedictory prayer.

In it the name of the Saviour is mentioned first, since all the blessings which we receive from God the Father, through God the Holy Spirit, flow forth to us through our union with our blessed Lord, in whom we become the acceptable children of our Father in heaven, looked upon by Him with favour and love.

‘Amen.’ Our Daily Service of Prayer is at an end. Yet once, before we close, we declare, O Lord, our earnest desire for all those things which have been the subjects of our separate prayers; our sincere sorrow for the sins which we have confessed; our hearty wish to offer to Thee our thanksgiving and praise. Accept, we beseech Thee, our Service, with all its imperfections. And let Thy blessing be upon us all for time and for eternity, through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

¹ The use of the word ‘Amen’ at the close of the petitions, and of the Service generally, has the highest warrant in the Word of God. For, under the old dispensation, the people, as they heard the blessings and curses of the Law, were to say ‘Amen.’ And St. Paul refers to the custom of saying ‘Amen’ at the giving of thanks by the minister. And in the Book of the Revelation of St. John, when the ascription is made of ‘blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever,’ the four living creatures said ‘Amen.’ (Rev. v. 13, cf. xix. 4).



APPENDIX.

THE following tables are added to show the probable origin of the Exhortation, Confession, and Absolution at the beginning of the Daily Service. It will be seen that these formularies are based throughout on Holy Scripture, and may be illustrated from ancient and modern forms.

The passages of Holy Scripture are derived, to a great extent, from the Rev. H. J. Bailey's 'Liturgy compared with the Bible.' The illustrations from ancient and modern forms are due mainly to Mr. Procter, Mr. Freeman, and the 'Monumenta Ritualia' of Mr. Maskell.

THE EXHORTATION.

‘Dearly beloved brethren,¹ the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness;² and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father;³ but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart;⁴ to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by His infinite goodness and mercy.⁵

‘And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together⁶ to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hands,⁷ to set forth His most worthy praise,⁸ to hear His most holy Word,⁹ and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.¹⁰

‘Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice,¹¹ unto the throne of the heavenly grace,¹² saying after me:

‘Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved.’ (Ph. iv. 1.)

‘If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers . . . ; then I will remember my covenant.’ (Lev. xxvi. 40-42; cf. Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 St. John i. 8, 9.)

‘He that covereth his sins shall not prosper.’ (Prov. xxviii. 13; cf. Is. xxx. 1.)

‘Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.’ (Jerem. iii. 13; cf. Numb. v. 7; Ps. li. 17.)

‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him.’ (Is. lv. 7; cf. 2 Chron. vii. 14; Jerem. iii. 12.)

‘We will go into His tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before his footstool.’ (Ps. cxxxii. 7; cf. 2 Chron. vii. 16.)

‘Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.’ (Ps. c. 4; cf. 1 Chron. xvi. 8.)

‘Praise God in His sanctuary.’ (Ps. cl. 1; cf. Ps. lxv. 1.)

‘So they read in the book of the Law of God distinctly,’ &c. (Neh. viii. 8; cf. Acts xv. 21.)

‘Mine house shall be called a house of prayer.’ (Is. lvi. 7; cf. 2 Chron. vii. 15.)

‘I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.’ (Lev. x. 3; cf. 2 Cor. x. 1; v. 20.)

‘Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne.’ (Is. lxvi. 1; cf. Heb. iv. 16.)

THE EXHORTATION.

'Fratres charissimi' of usual occurrence in old offices.
'That ye be of your sins clean confessed and for them contrite, that is to say, having sorrow in your heart for your sins.'—Old Public Exhortation in English, sometimes used preparatory to Communion.

'It is agreeable to godliness that, as often as we appear before the Lord, before all things we should acknowledge and confess our sins, and pray for remission of the same.'—Hermann's Consultation.

'Quamvis enim, dilectissimi, nulla sunt tempora quæ divinis non sint plena muneribus, et semper nobis ad misericordiam Dei per Ipsijs gratiam præstatur accessus, nunc tamen omnium mentes majori studio ad spiritalis profectus moveri, et ampliori fiduciâ animari oportet, quando,' &c.—Homily of St. Leo.

'Fratres, cogitet nunc vestrūm unusquisque se coram Deo sisti, ut peccata et delicta sua omnia simplici animo confiteatur et agnoscat, atque apud vosmetipos me præsumentem sequimini his verbis.'—Strasburg Liturgy of Pullain : pub. 1552.

'Also ye shall kneel down upon your knees, saying after me, "I cry God mercy."—Old English Exhortation before Communion.

THE CONFESSION.

‘Almighty and most merciful Father;’ We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep.² We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.³ We have offended against Thy holy laws.⁴ We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;⁵ And we have done those things which we ought not to have done;⁶ And there is no health in us.⁷

‘But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.⁸ Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults.⁹ Restore Thou them that are penitent;¹⁰ According to Thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord.¹¹

‘And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake;¹² That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life;¹³ To the glory of Thy Holy Name.¹⁴ Amen.’

‘I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, saith the Lord Almighty.’ (2 Cor. vi. 17.) ‘Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the God of comfort.’ (2 Cor. i. 3.)

‘All we like sheep have gone astray.’ (Is. liii. 6.)

‘They said, we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.’ (Jerem. xviii. 12.)

‘We have offended against the Lord; our trespass is great.’ (2 Chron. xxviii. 13.)

‘Ye have omitted the weightier matters of the law.’ (St. Matth. xxiii. 23; cf. Neh. i. 7.)

‘They have done that which is evil in my sight.’ (2 Kings xxi. 15; cf. Rom. vii. 20.)

‘The whole head is sick.’ (Is. i. 5.)

‘Without Me ye can do nothing.’ (St. John xv. 5.)

‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ (St. Luke xviii. 13; cf. Rom. vii. 24.)

‘Spare Thy people, O Lord.’ (Joel ii. 17.)

¹⁰ ‘He restoreth my soul.’ (Ps. xxiii. 3; cf. St. Luke xv. 22.)

¹¹ ‘To Him give all the Prophets witness, that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.’ (Acts x. 43; cf. Is. i. 18.)

¹² ‘We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.’ (Eph. ii. 10.)

¹³ ‘The grace of God hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that . . . we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present time.’ (Tit. ii. 11, 12.)

¹⁴ ‘Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ (1 Cor. x. 31.)

* The two connected ideas involved in the word ‘health’ require the two classes of texts, and form the link of connection between the first and second parts of the Confession.

THE CONFESSION.

‘Omnipotens, æterne, et vive Deus, æterne Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, . . . Qui dixisti, ‘Vivo ego, nolo mortem peccatoris, sed ut convertatur et vivat,’ . . . confiteor Tibi me miserrimum peccatorem multa peccata fecisse, et doleo toto corde quod offendit Te.’—Melanchthon.

‘Domine Deus, Pater æterne et omnipotens, agnoscimus et fatemur ingenuè peccatores esse nos miseros, adeoquè à primâ origine, quâ concepti et nati sumus, tam ad omne malum esse pronos, quam ab omni bono alienos; quo virtus tuas leges sanctissimas assiduè transgredimur.’—Strasburg Liturgy of Pullain.

‘O Lord, be intent upon us, who all as sheep have gone astray, who are all dying creatures.’—Orison of David.

‘Attamen pœnitet sic offendisse bonitatem tuam. . . Miserere igitur nostri omnium, O Deus et Pater clementissime ac misericors, per nomen Filii Tui Jesu Christi Domini nostri Te obtestamur.’—Strasb. Lit.

‘Regard not the multitude of my iniquities, but have mercy upon me, and be favourable to me a most miserable sinner.’—Orison of David.

‘But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,’ was the customary phrase all over the West, at the end of the short passages from Scripture which formed the Lections at Matins.—(Freeman, i. 321.)

‘Spare Thou them that confess.’—Orison of the Priest and Penitent.

‘Largire atque adauge indies Spiritus Tui Sancti vim et dona in nobis, quo . . . veram pœnitentiam agamus, quâ mortui peccato deinceps abundemus fructibus justitiae,’ &c.—Strasb. Lit.

‘That by Thy help . . . returning from the ways of error to the paths of *righteousness*, they may possess what Thy grace has bestowed, and Thy mercy hath *restored*.’—Orison of Priest and Penitent.

THE ABSOLUTION.

'Almighty God,' the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,² who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live;³ and hath given power and commandment to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins:⁴

'He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent,⁵ and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel.'

'Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance,' and His Holy Spirit,⁶ that those things may please Him which we do at this present;⁷ and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy;⁸ so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹¹ Amen.

¹ 'The Lord God appeared unto Abram, and said, I am the Almighty God.' (Gen. xvii. 1.)

² 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies' (2 Cor. i. 3.)

³ 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.)

⁴ 'God hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.' (2 Cor. v. 18-20; cf. St. John xx. 21; St. Matth. xvi. 19; xviii. 18.)

⁵ 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.' (Cf. St. Mark i. 14, 15; Ezek. xviii. 27.)

⁶ 'By Him all that believe are justified from all things.' (Acts xiii. 39; cf. Ps. lxxxvi. 5; Acts xx. 21.)

⁷ 'Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' (Acts v. 31; cf. St. James i. 17.)

⁸ 'A new heart will I also give you, and I will put My Spirit upon you.' (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; cf. 1 Thess. iv. 8; St. Luke xi. 13.)

⁹ 'Offer the sacrifices of righteousness.' (Ps. iv. 5; cf. Ps. lxxxix. 7; Eccl. v. 1; Ps. xix. 14.)

¹⁰ 'That he should no longer live the rest of his life in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.' (1 Pet. iv. 2.)

¹¹ 'Keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right: for that shall bring a man peace at the last.' (Ps. xxxvii. 37.) 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous.' (Ps. lviii. 11; cf. Rom. ii. 7-10.)

THE ABSOLUTION.

'Lord God, who dost not suffer sinners to perish, and to die in their works, but rather wilt that they shall be convert and live, we humbly pray Thee to forgive us now that we have time and space.'—Marshall's Primer, 1535.

'desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live . . . that He may entirely pardon and abolish all their sins for all them that truly repent.'—John à Lasco's Latin Service Book for the Use of German Refugees in England, about 1550.*

'Thou hast also, O Lord, made choice by the same Thine Apostles, of those that should always discharge the office of the Priesthood in Thy Holy Church, to the end that they may remit sins upon the earth, and bind and loose all the bonds of iniquity.'—Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil.

'To all of you, I say, who are thus minded, I pronounce (or declare, *denuncio*) on the faith of the promise of Christ, that all your sins are forgiven in Heaven by God our Father.'—German Service Book.

[The order and phraseology are so singularly those of our own form, that I cannot doubt that it was here our Revisers found the old elements put together for them in the shape which they adopted.]—Freeman, i. 313.

'We beseech Thee, that Thou wouldest give us Thy Holy Spirit . . . that Thy Holy Law may in all our life be expressed.'—German Service Book.

'Spatium veræ pœnitentiae, emendationem vitæ, gratiam et consolationem Sancti Spiritus, tribuat vobis Omnipotens Deus, et ad vitam perducat æternam.'—Sarum Brev. Service for Compline.

* The original Latin form is given in Procter, p. 44.

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